B. K. S. Iyengar, world renowned for his study, practice and teaching of Yoga, now turns his attention to the artistic interpretation of body, mind and soul through Yoga.

Those familiar with Iyengar's previously published *Light on Yoga*, where the technique of each posture is learnt and the thoroughness and clarity required to perform it through constant practice is mastered, will find *The Art of Yoga* supplementary. It highlights the artistic interpretation of the postures already mastered, it is the next stage in the practice of Yoga.

> 'Any action done with beauty and purity, and in complete harmony of body, mind and soul, is art. In this way art elevates the artist. As Yoga fulfils the essential need of art, it is an art.'
>
> B. K. S. IYENGAR

THE ART OF YOGA

B K S Iyengar

HarperCollins *Publishers* India
a joint venture with
THE INDIA TODAY GROUP
New Delhi

HarperCollins *Publishers* India
a joint venture with
The India Today Group
by arrangement with
HarperCollins *Publishers* Limited

First published in 1993 by
HarperCollins *Publishers* India
Seventh impression 2003

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HarperCollins *Publishers*
1A Hamilton House, Connaught Place, New Delhi 110 001, India
77-85 Fulham Palace Road, London W6 8JB, United Kingdom
Hazelton Lanes, 55 Avenue Road, Suite 2900, Toronto, Ontario M5R 3L2
and 1995 Markham Road, Scarborough, Ontario M1B 5M8, Canada
25 Ryde Road, Pymble, Sydney, NSW 2073, Australia
31 View Road, Glenfield, Auckland 10, New Zealand
10 East 53rd Street, New York NY 10022, USA

Printed and bound at
Thomson Press (India) Ltd.

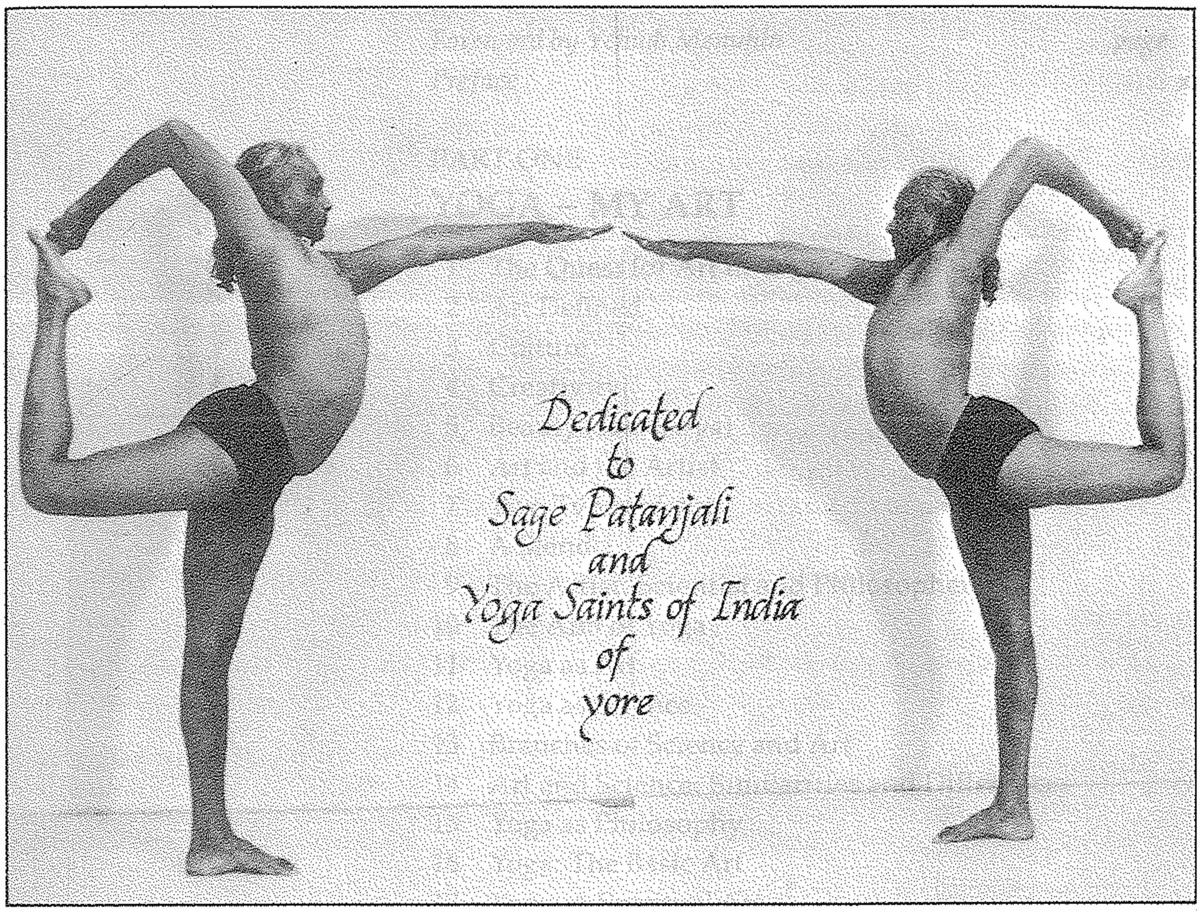
Also by B.K.S. Iyengar

LIGHT ON PRANAYAMA
LIGHT ON YOGA
LIGHT ON YOGA SUTRA
THE ILLUSTRATED LIGHT ON YOGA
TREE OF YOGA

Dhanyānām uttamam dākṣyam, dhanānām uttamam śṛtam
Lābhānām śreyamārogyam, sukhānām tuṣṭiruttamā

Mahābhārata 3.314.76

Talent is the best of blessings
Wisdom is the rarest of treasures
Health is the best of acquisitions
Delight is the finest of joys.


Dedicated
to
Sage Patanjali
and
Yoga Saints of India
of
yore

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Foreword

This extraordinary man, Yogācārya B. K. S. Iyengar, has understood that the one inexorable dimension of progress is from the crude towards the subtle. He has equally experienced the power of utmost refinement and the extended gift of bliss and ecstasy as opposed to the transient values of pleasure.

What power in nuclear physics, in the studying of nuclear particles, the smallest possible elements in nature! What power and potential in the controlled sensibilities of Japanese precision and courtesy! And yet who can deny the bliss or simply the quiet contentment rendered in ecstasy of beauty in nature and in art? Art as Iyengar defines it is a contribution to society and to civilisation, as against the exploitative and negotiable aspects of pleasure.

Bliss, as the artist understands it, is non-exploitable and non-negotiable and is rooted in the experiences and dedication of a life such as Iyengar's.

YEHUDI MENUHIN
London, 1984

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Preface

Art is the application of man's intellect in a chosen field to the exploration of nature and the creation of new ideas, forms and shapes from nature's subjects and objects. It is a search for perfection and truth. As food is essential to sustain life, so is art for man to enhance his knowledge of the spirit.

Any action done with beauty and purity, and in complete harmony of body, mind and soul, is art. In this way art elevates the artist. As yoga fulfils the essential need of art, it is an art. It starts as a basic art and shows the way of striving for and emulating the divine, with the help of the divine spark within, to reach spiritual quintessence.

A man's actions mirror his personality better than his words. As the finest art springs from the hub of repeated actions, it is very difficult for an artist to transcend the field of art by words. Art comprehends many dimensions whereas linguistic expression is limited. Thus the essence of yoga cannot be imparted by language since its basis falls within the same framework as any other disciplined art, calling for imagination, repetition, precision, attention to detail, and creation. Only ceaseless practice and endless striving for perfection engenders skill, understanding and wisdom and forms the subtle body of the ineffable which is art.

Indians are tradition-bound in their practice of religion, philosophy and art. They rely upon foundations laid down by their sages millenia ago. Whether in music, dance, drama, painting or sculpture, they study the age-old scriptures pertaining to their chosen art. They evolve their own media before presenting their work in a new light and as a new way of life.

Yoga is a disciplinary art which develops the faculties of the body, mind and intellect. Its purpose is to refine man. It is a commitment to a life's pattern and a way towards right living. In my case it led me to explore and observe the hidden, unknown, parts of my body and the movements of my mind. Slowly and surely it helped me to emerge with a clean body and a clear mind and to blossom into a rich, pure and creative personality. It helped me attain the high purpose in life of exploring the self while living as a householder with a wife and children and performing my wider role in the world. In this decisive pattern of living I

found a certain essence and fragrance springing within me. That essence is the art of knowing my own inner distinctive nature, and that fragrance, the state of my being. Hence, yoga is the culmination of art for me.

Throughout my life, I have tried to blend my yogic practices with study of the writings of our ancient sages and their experiences in yoga, in particular those of Patanjali. With determined effort I infused their thoughts into my lifestyle to capture the essence of their teaching and to grasp the meaning behind the concise statements of the *Yoga Sūtras* and other yoga texts. Yet the work is my own. As a musician plays his instrument, or a sculptor chisels a statue from stone, I have tried to use my body and mind as instruments and to refine them. I have attempted to expand my consciousness from the personal level to the universal.

It was Patanjali whose work inspired me to see and develop the artistry of yoga, and to study its philosophy, spiritual values and powers. I also found in his treatise guidelines to the yogi-artist for living in society. He advocates friendliness towards all, sympathy for suffering people, kindness to those who are not blessed with essential needs, and the cultivation of delight on seeing those who are better placed than oneself. In other words, he advises indifference towards the upheavals of the world in order to gain inner peace and even-mindedness towards all.[1]

His step-by-step guidance develops man's critical faculties and intellectual awareness. His precise, deep, philosophical and scientific instructions enable one to excel in any chosen field, whether it be artistic, medical or therapeutic, or whether the aim is to seek to reach spiritual emancipation or to delve into any other sphere of universal application. His works elevate the strivings of the *sādhaka*. His sūtras help each individual to discover and tap his own potential by applying the yogic principles in his personal life and avocation.

I have not completely mastered this art even today. Perfection eludes me but this has not reduced my efforts. The more I work, the more insignificant my efforts appear to be. Yet it is this 'divine discontent' which drives me on.

This book, therefore, is based on three main strands: first, the interpretation of yoga in the light of Patanjali's philosophy, with extensive quotations to show the relevance of his work in the field of art; second, my own yogic study, reflections and experiences of a lifetime; and, third, the painstaking, diligent and delicate labour which transformed my yoga practices into a work of art. I have availed myself of thirty sutras from Patanjali which have a bearing on yoga as an art. The meaning of these sūtras is

based on my own interpretations of my work in the art of yoga for nearly half a century.

Even if my words fail to convey the real inner meaning of the postures, I have done my best to present each āsana in its purest form in which it speaks its own language of grace and beauty. Every āsana communicates directly with the eye, and the more you see the more you are drawn to experience its elegance, harmony, balance and serenity.

I hope my *Art of Yoga* inspires many to perform the āsanas critically and in a studious manner, cultivating a taste for refinement which is concomitant with art. I shall be happy if this work brings dynamism and strength to those who practise yoga and enriches their lives with a new dimension in the art of living.

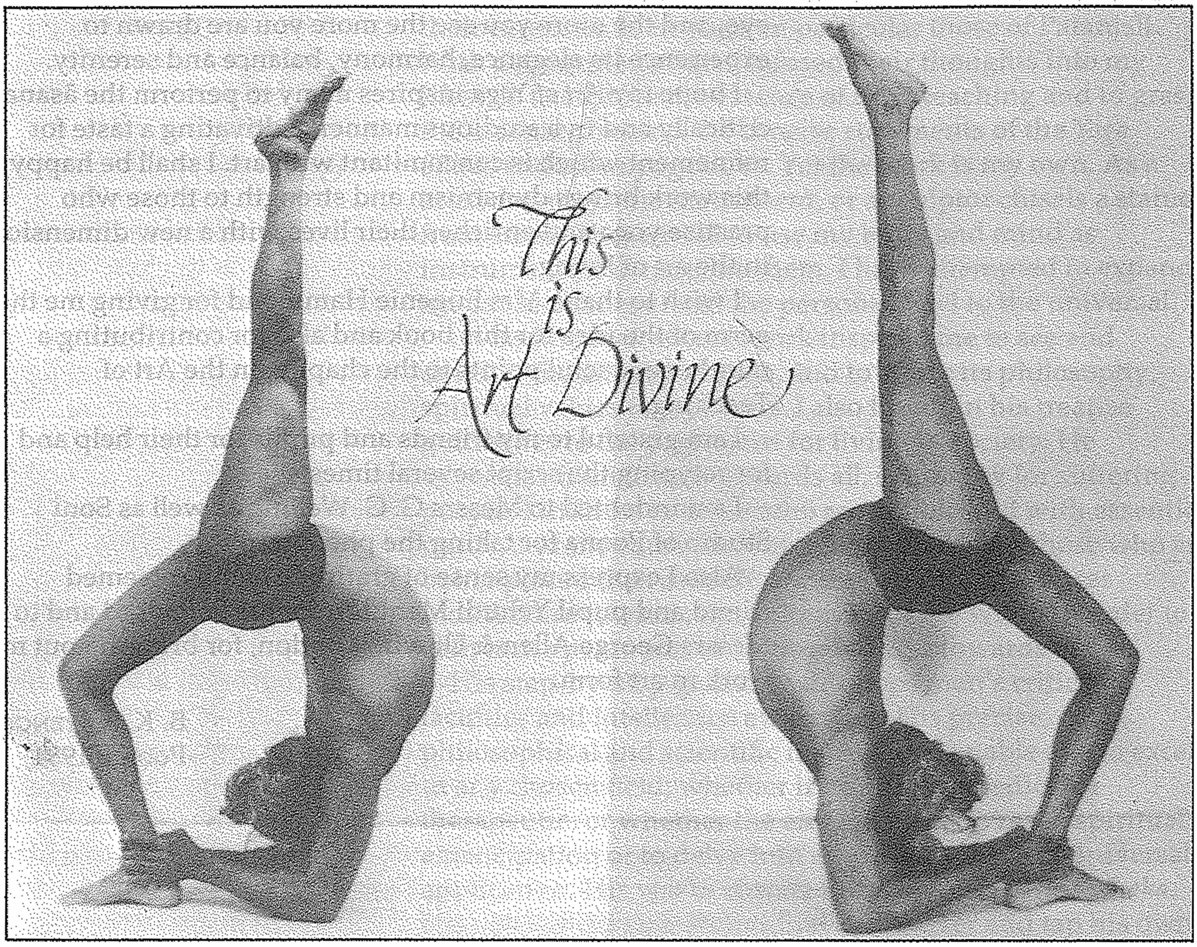
I wish to thank Mrs Eugenie Hammond for giving me the germ of the idea for this book and also for contributing a number of useful points to the chapter on the Art of Teaching.

I am grateful to my friends and pupils for their help and for retyping the script several times.

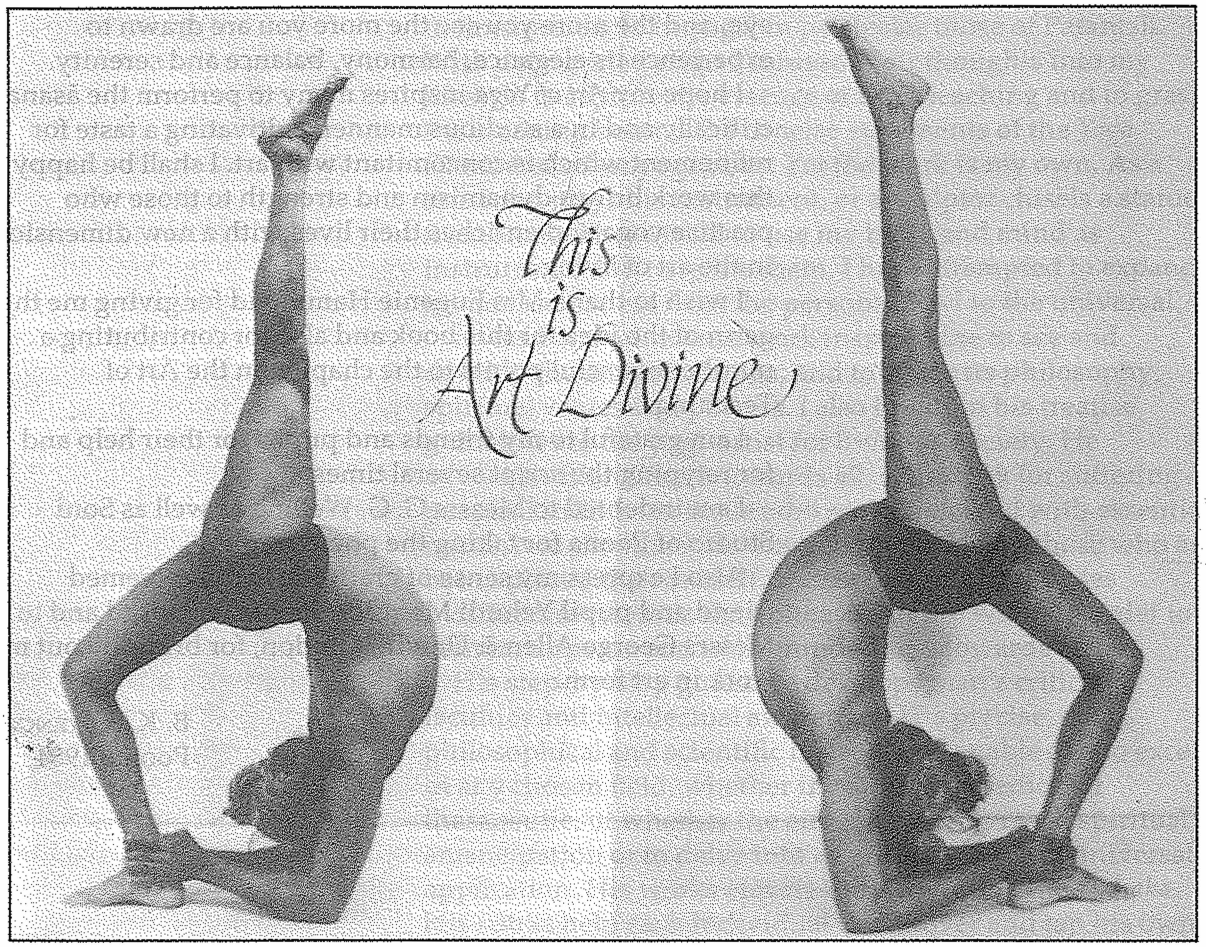
I am indebted to Messrs G. G. Welling as well as Soni Studio of Poona for taking the photographs.

Also I express my sense of gratitude to my esteemed friend and pupil Yehudi Menuhin for his Foreword and to Messrs George Allen & Unwin, London, for bringing out my work in art form.

B. K. S. Iyengar
Poona, 1984


This is Art Divine

PART ONE
YOGA - MY ART


This
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Art Divine

PART ONE
YOGA – MY ART

1 The Quest for Art in Yoga

The Art of Yoga is supplementary to my book *Light on Yoga*. With the help of the latter aspirants will learn the technique of each āsana and, through constant practice, will master the thoroughness and clarity required to perform it. *The Art of Yoga* highlights the artistic presentation of the āsanas. It focuses the attention of the practitioner and enables him to observe in detail the action of the muscles, the holding of the joints, the spacing of the limbs, the movements of the skin, and finally the way all these integrate, transmitting expressions of delicate balance and comfort, grace and poise, charm and beauty. Patanjali describes the ease with which an āsana is performed after its mastery as steadiness of the body, poise and happiness of the mind.[2]

Since I was not born in a house of artists or yogis, I had no predisposition towards yoga. From birth I was affected by one illness or another, which made my body ugly and shapeless. Though I practised yoga for the sake of health, I had absolutely no inkling that one day I would perform it artistically. I started only with the resolve to get from nature what she would not give on her own. I became healthy, but destiny had its own plans for me. A higher power, or call it God, created situations conducive to my taking up this subject thoughtfully and seriously. At a very tender age, when I had just begun to learn the process of yoga, I was asked to teach it. The challenge was great, the means to meet it meagre; but the combination of challenge and want of means carried its own reward. My learning helped me to teach; my teaching helped me to search and learn. At the same time I was frequently approached to give demonstrations, which meant harsher self-discipline and additional responsibilities.

Learning yoga is one thing, teaching it is another, and then presenting it on the stage before diverse audiences is yet another. I had to tune, tone and prepare my body as an instrument, mould my mind and adjust myself to develop fresh modes of practice, different methods of teaching and new ways of presentation. Like a diamond reflecting light from its numerous facets, art has different aspects in performance, teaching, and presentation. Sensitivity also varies according to the adaptation of the same art in different vocations. All these factors combined to lead me further in my development of yoga.

I had no artist for a mentor; therefore, I had to pave my own way by learning to develop original thinking, by creating new ideas, and by studying as much as possible the movements, anatomical structure and shape of each āsana. I visited temples and caves to study the carvings, paintings and sculptures. I observed the various postures of the body conceived and depicted by different artists at different times. I watched the creeping gait of vegetation, amphibians and reptiles, the flight of birds, the majestic movements of animals and the behaviour of men, and I learnt from all these. Looking at God's creation as well as man's, I began to perform the āsanas to the fullest possible extent, notwithstanding my limited abilities. I looked into Patanjali's sūtras and found his words enchanting. He says that one should become immersed and apply oneself with devotion and dedication to gain direct perception of the essence which emanates from yogic practices.[3] This became my first guiding principle in developing sensitivity in the art of yoga.

Imperceptibly at first, my mind and body began to reveal some of the qualities which our Indian classical texts describe as being the effects of yoga. For instance, Patanjali says that 'through excellent practice of yoga the practitioner develops beauty, elegance and grace, power and strength, compactness and adamantine hardness, symmetry and balance'.[4] Svātmārāma likewise states that success in haṭha yoga brings health and grace in the body, delight in the face, sweetness and depth in the voice, clarity in the eyes, cleanliness in the nerves and abundance of vigour and vitality.[5] I, too, felt that my body was losing its awkwardness, dullness and non-awareness. It began to glow with health and strength and my mind was happy and contented. Yoga brought a new meaning to my life. All these changes inspired me and led me to search for the hidden truth and artistic essence in each āsana. By regular practice, I developed familiarity with each āsana and soon I began to revel in the beauty of each āsana while performing it.

The performance of āsanas as an art is little known today. Hence I had to rebel within myself to break new ground by working on the āsanas with constant attention and total discipline. I found joy in bettering my best, finding new movements, meanings and aesthetic nuances in each āsana; in learning, unlearning and learning again. In this way I sought to perfect myself, while at the same time I tried to discover fresh and better ways of presentation, taking note of the needs of the audience. Each time I gave a demonstration I observed from moment to moment the reaction of the spectators and constantly changed my

approach and the angle from which I presented each āsana, in order to engage their attention, evoke interest and kindle curiosity to learn the art. Years of practice brought skill and maturity as I began to find my balance. Gradually, I became indifferent to the responses of the audience as my practice became artistic in itself and brought charm and delicacy, poise and peace, harmony and delight in presentation.

There was no fixed format for the āsanas when I started. I therefore had to face the hardships of working in the unknown and experimenting with my body. Often this was painful; I had to fight pessimism with optimism, turn indifference into interest. I also did the āsanas in front of the mirror to see whether my observations and feelings were correct. After years of practice, I was able to observe the gradual unfolding of the beauty of the āsanas while performing them.

Thus I laboured hard to synchronise the movements of limbs, carefully feeling the extension, expansion and creation of space for the intelligence to pervade the entire body and allow the energy to flow freely and rhythmically. Through my own thinking, assiduous practice and self-control, I analysed every movement and adjusted every fibre and muscle of my body. I developed flexibility and achieved integration. With religious fervour in my practice, a spirit of introspection and surrender to God,[6] which Patanjali considers necessary for yoga, and a liberal and non-fanatical mind, my hard-won and carefully cultivated talent took the form of an inborn gift.

My practice elevated my thoughts, purified my mind, brought poise in each fibre of my body and sublimated my ego. It led me from the serenity and diffusion of consciousness (*citta prasādanam*) towards the richness of the soul.

This total co-ordination united the movements of my body, mind, intelligence, will and soul. Patanjali describes this transforming process exactly: 'The persevering efforts cease when the āsana is mastered; then the practitioner moves on towards the infinite and becomes one within himself.'[7] The intensity and sincerity of my practice caused me to realise this truth when the āsana and I became one. There came an uninterrupted flow of devotion, attention, contemplation, beauty and grace, culminating in a radiant light of yogic knowledge. Patanjali calls this knowledge which accrues from yogic discipline *Jñānadīpti*.[8] This light penetrated my being and awakened in me the vision of the artistic expression of each āsana whether I was awake, dreaming or asleep.[9]

With this inspiration received through communion from

within and communication from without, I have attempted to show with the maximum possible accuracy the basic bond connecting all āsanas, although each one is a distinct entity.

The āsanas shown in this book are portrayed with one aim: to show how a mortal body – God's gift of earthly beauty – can be explored, moulded and blended into manifold unique forms to penetrate the recesses of the mind and to reach the frontiers of the spirit.

2 *Art Defined*

Many works of art are inspired by religion. The sages of India discovered that man is made up of three layers – physical, mental and spiritual. In order to develop this triunity of body, mind and soul, the sages introduced various arts such as yoga (*yogika*), athletics and wrestling (*māllika*), archery (*dhānuṣya*), dance and drama (*nṛtya and nātya*), music (*sāngītika*), and economics (*vyāvahārika*). Śaivatantra enumerates sixty-four arts which cover practical and mechanical fields as well as the fine arts. These arts enable men to live harmoniously, systematically striving to attain the goals of truth (*satyam*), goodness (*śivam*) and beauty (*sundaram*), since each art reveals truth, perfection and beauty.

Art uses nature's beauty and transcends it. It is a communication of the feelings of the artist, an expression of inner awakenings and experiences. Its development depends on the need it fulfils and on the vision of the artist. Its purpose is to be aesthetic, uplifting, beautiful, outstanding, educative and clear. Its ultimate goal is divinity, which the artist seeks to transmit to each individual and to society.

As Śri Aurobindo says: 'Art is nothing less in its fundamental truth than the aspect of beauty of the Divine manifestation. Art is not only the technique or form of beauty, not only the discovery or the expression of beauty – it is a self-expression of consciousness under the conditions of aesthetic vision and a perfect execution . . . Art can express eternal truth, it is not limited to the expression of form and appearance . . . Art is the expression of highest beauty, when it is the same as the supremest good and supremest truth.' He emphasises that 'it is necessary that every man should have his artistic faculty developed, his taste trained, his sense of beauty and insight into form and

colour, and that which is expressed in form and colour, made habitually active, correct and sensitive'.[10] Similarly, to experience the divinity of yoga at its highest requires years of hard practice, and the teachings of yoga have to be followed in their entirety. However, everyone can enjoy the effects of yoga to some extent, since all unconsciously practise at least a few of the yogic principles to some degree.

The Mother of Śri Aurobindo Āśhram says: 'Art is a living harmony and beauty that must be expressed in all the movements of existence . . . When a true artist, one who looks for his creative source to a higher world, turns to yoga, he will find that his inspiration becomes more direct and powerful and his expression clearer and deeper.'[11]

Tolstoy, in *What is Art and Essays on Art*,[12] classifies works of art into three categories:

'1 Those which stand out by the importance of their content;

2 Those which stand out by their beauty or form; and

3 Those which stand out by their heartfelt sincerity.

These three kinds all yield approximations to perfect art and are inevitably produced wherever there is art.'

Art is the channelling of one's talent and skill into a chosen path[13] which then becomes the religion of the self (*svadharma*).

An idea, a word, a shape, a vision or a symbol[14] may grip the imagination of an artist and the interest in it is then cultivated so that the full fragrance is felt and experienced.[15] He has to practise with the trinity of body, mind and soul until his genius bursts forth in the form of revelation. This is art. These quotations from Patanjali show that the conception and revelation of art are timeless.

Art in yoga is skill in action wherein all opposing forces are moulded towards oneness so that each and every movement expresses grace and balance, elegance and beauty, effortlessly and in unison.

Ānanda Coomàraswamy, one of the famous critics in the field of art, says: 'Art is perfect workmanship.' This definition indicates well the perfection, skill and effort that are required to produce a work of art. Art at once accords with nature and transcends it. Nature, being the subject and instrument or the object used in the creation of art, has to be refined and moulded to become art. Art is not a fantasy or a dream but a representation of experiences which interdepend, interweave, and interplay with one's tradition, culture and civilisation.

3 *Culture*

Man's tendencies and behaviour are transient. He has to cast away these momentary ideas and cultivate certain norms for his own refinement and improvement. As Patanjali puts it, right words (*śabda*), right meaning (*artha*) and right knowledge (*jñāna*) should be blended together with deliberate choice to synchronise thoughts and actions, creating new awareness in man.[16] This new awareness leads him gradually but certainly towards the essence of culture. As a result of this development his life becomes ideal, simple, constructive, creative and rational. Insight and wisdom spring from him unceasingly without external aids. He has a special character of his own which, as the sage Patanjali says, is distinct from the knowledge heard, gained, ascertained or inferred.[17] Such a supremely cultured life is the foundation of the civilisation of the world.

4 *Creativity*

Art, to borrow Patanjali's definition, is dependent upon direct perception, imagination, inference, proposition, study of scriptures[18] and power of understanding (jñāna). An artist must have direct or intuitive perception and vision. His art must express a clear statement of his goal and his work should have a universal meaning and appeal. He must have enough knowledge to create a work whose underlying principles and objects have a wider context than mere momentary charm. The expression of art is spiritual. The product of the creative process must be 'a thing of beauty', which, according to Keats, is 'a joy for ever'.

Creativity may consist in the ability to produce something totally new, or it may be a rediscovery in relation to existing norms. It belongs to the field of the mind and intellect, and it is evolutionary. To start with art is empirical, dependent upon the system of motor and sensory responses, and then upon memory, imagination, measured manipulations, assessments and decisions. Creativity is a perpetual process which accompanies all normal growth and progress. It is highly useful and educative and partakes of the fascination that all creation possesses. As a quality, it is an essential ingredient in the make-up of every artist. Without it there is

no artist and no art. Nature and God create in a never-ending procession.

Without creativity there is no art, and without health there is no art of creativity. Any impairment of physical or mental health distracts or obstructs the powers of concentration and creation. It is true that many great artists have created works of art even though they have suffered from the severest disabilities which their creative spirit had to overcome. Even now there are fine artists who have to overcome untold handicaps to produce fine works of art. Nevertheless, robust health is a valuable adjunct to creation. Some artists have been struck down by the very strength of their creative spirit which their nervous system, body and mind have not been able to bear. They produced wonderful works, but only for a short period. Patanjali lists a number of distractions which hinder the creative process. They are disease, sluggishness, doubt, intoxicated pride, laziness, indiscipline, illusion, missing the point, inability to maintain the achieved progress,[19] sorrows, dejection, unsteadiness in the body and gasping breath.[20] He urges that yoga should be practised to face and overcome existing hindrances and to guard against those not yet known.[21] This yogic discipline brings clarity to the mind and intellect and strength to the body so that the creative spark may burn in man to the very last.

By nature, the art of creativity is a painful process. Each act of creation has its own pangs. It requires preparation, mental flexibility, sometimes hard diligent labour. Phases of fear, discomfort, tension, frustration and dejection invade the mind of the artist and kill his interest. These have to be accepted as unavoidable accompaniments on the hazardous and arduous journey of artistic creation. Unshaken, the artist must continually labour long (*nirantarābhyāsa*), and use his own ethical code (*yama* and *niyama*), sensitive intellect (*buddhi*), right reasoning and judgement (*savicāra* and *vivecana*) to reach the desired goal. Then his intuitive intelligence (*sahaja jñāna*) and inner vision (*antardṛṣṭi*) attain the highest order of clear perception. In the words of Patanjali, when memory is ripe the mind becomes pure and actions are perfect; the impressions take firm root, and preconceived notions stop intervening; experimentation comes to an end and experiences become distinct and crystal clear.[22] The mind has four levels of consciousness, namely the subconscious, the unconscious, the conscious and the superconscious. In the creative artist, all these merge into one profound superconscious meditative state which is nothing but the yogic state of *samādhi*. Then whatever has been created stands as a work of art for posterity.

5 *Beauty* (Soundarya)

Lord Krishna says: 'Whatever being is endowed with beauty, goodness, glory and might, know that it has sprung from a spark of my splendour.'[23] When the heart is filled with a unique feeling of joy and harmony, there is beauty. It unifies and brings understanding between all the senses of perception, the mind, the intelligence and the soul, and creates a taste and flavour in the art. The flavour and taste differ according to the beholder. First it is felt indistinctly, then it gives delight to the senses, and finally it appears with clarity. In beauty there is balance, order, form, symmetry and design. Through lifelong loving effort, new ideas of harmony and balance spring forth from the soul for perfect execution, expressing at once serenity and divinity. The artist loses his personal identity and becomes a universal entity. This is 'beauty in action'. Art glows from the immortal flame of the artist's soul, expressing itself through his body, senses and mind.

The artist-yogi brings himself to the altar without any need of outside help. He uses his muscles, joints, bones, intelligence and self and places them in an orderly (*vinyāsa*) and pleasing composition and gains soul satisfaction. As one sees the invisible electricity in the form of light, the yogi too sees the invisible soul in the form of the visible body through perfect yogic performance. In this state he is alone, clean in body and mind, with focused attention and will, ripe in intelligence, simple and innocent in nature. He is full of delight in the tranquillity of his consciousness. Through perfect execution of āsanas, *prāṇāyāma* and *dhyāna*, the yogi expresses the real and ideal beauty. This expression is the essence of yoga.

6 *Art and the Artist*

Art is the expression of the artist's inherent feelings and highest experiences as he comes in contact with objects, thoughts and persons. The root of art is imitation or the following of examples. It demands superhuman attention and unparalleled skill in efforts and actions which build up in the artist a profound sense of beauty. The artist has to

keep in mind the highest tradition and culture and at the same time be free to express his feelings and experiences. Art is the marvel of life as it integrates thoughts, words and deeds (*manasā, vācā* and *kāyā*) into a harmonious whole. It is impersonal and at the same time individualistic in taste, flavour and delicacy. Art is unity in diversity. The artist starts without any preconceptions. He adopts various means for attaining perfection through his inner faculties and he succeeds in achieving a definite form, shape and stability. Finally he comes to realise the true state of his own being.[24] This culmination is one of the wonders of art. As the mind is vibrant and always in a state of flow, so equally is art. For the artist each movement and each thought presents a challenge and a counter-challenge. These are projected consciously or unconsciously until they mature in the presentation of his art in movements of creation, evolution, refinement and revelation.

A true artist creates, evolves, refines, illumines and reveals the beauty felt by him, both to himself and to his audience.

The presentation of art calls for a standard of aesthetics and reverential feelings on the part of the artist. Even the common man who has not yet understood the meaning of the work of art must find it appealing, thrilling and emancipating.

Discipline,[25] practice and dispassion[26] are the essentials that go hand in hand with the mastery of any art. Without discipline and freedom, art cannot develop, nor can one become a true artist. This is one of the cardinal teachings of Patanjali which applies to all subjects. Freedom is the culmination or fruit of discipline; there can be no freedom without it.

In yoga, the disciplined practices are ethical (*yama* and *niyama*), physical (āsana), physiological (*prāṇāyāma*), mental (*pratyāhāra* and *dhāraṇā*) and spiritual (*dhyāna* and *samādhi*).[27] When these are performed with love of labour, faith, vigour, memory, total absorption and illuminative awareness,[28] then the yogi is an artist. When the artist is accomplished in yoga, the art of yoga flows in him with undisturbed peace, joy and bliss.[29] The same is true for all arts. All the disciplines and mental qualities cited in the Yoga Sūtras have to be observed for any form of art to flourish in all its glory.

7 *Two Types of Art*

Art is of two types: one is the art of pleasure (*bhoga kalā*) and the other of abiding divine ecstasy (*yoga kalā*). The art of pleasure brings transient comfort and contentment to the viewers. Being pleasure-prone, it attracts the masses and has their support, bringing the artist in close contact with them. It has a quality which excites and distracts and may end up in desire and lust as *kāma kalā*. Single-minded adherence[30] to reaching the pinnacle of art without being caught by excitements and distractions is *yoga kalā*, which requires intensity of purpose and concentration with deep penetration. The artist is not caught in the web of the senses but heads towards spiritual bliss. This *kalā* integrates him to the very core of his being.

8 *A Blend*

A blend of *bhoga kalā* and *yoga kalā* is essential for an artist of calibre. Mastery of *bhoga kalā* alone makes one a slave of the senses, while mastery of *yoga kalā* alone would make a person useless and non-fruitful to society. A judicious blend of both *bhoga kalā* and *yoga kalā* will enable the artist to present his art with dignity, character, prudence and equipoise. Then the expression of his art is filled with spiritual passion and feeling, and is at the same time humorous, elegant, graceful, excellent and beautiful.

9 *The Artist: Scientist and Philosopher*

Art is based on repose, reflection, science and philosophy. Art and beauty are free from bonds imposed by place, time, age, sex and religion. Art is developed with the help of science and the background of philosophy. In a sense an artist is a scientist as well as a philosopher. Yoga is no exception to this rule. Indians consider all forms of art as yoga. The body is the abode of the soul. It is the temple of

the yogi as well as the artist. Yoga encompasses everything from the skin of the body to the soul and takes the yogi and the artist from the plane of the body towards the plane of the spirit.

The yogi or the artist develops the integration of thoughts with will-power (*manobala*) and maintains harmony within and outside himself. He draws inspiration from the touch of the Divine (*adṛṣṭa bala*), and with spiritual strength (*ātma bala*) uses his technique and skill to produce a synthesis of divine expression and divine beauty (*divya soundarya*).

10 *The Aim of Yoga*

The aim of yoga is to attain perfection of the intellect, both of the head and the heart, so that the artist becomes devoted, true and pure. This demands an almost total relinquishment of interest in other activities of life except the chosen path.

The mind is fluid and runs after sensual pleasures. Art demands total undivided focal attention. Hence Patanjali succinctly explains that the mind must be controlled and then sublimated[31] to serve the artistic nature of yoga to its highest potency. Yoga or any art requires acute sharpness of intellect and alert organs of perception. In yoga there is no competition, but it requires freedom to think and reconstruct with a desire to perform better. Then it brings to the yogi the most exalted enlightenment. From now on, wherever the yogi is and whatever he does, his thoughts are rooted in spiritual communion, which takes him to the zenith of spiritual life.[32]

11 *Yoga as Art*

Dr S. Radhakrishnan says: 'Yoga is an art of opening the unconscious parts of our being, which will enable us to feel the direct touch of cosmic consciousness, nay, sometimes inspire ourselves with the touch.'[33]

Again, he says: 'We cannot look upon man as a physical machine to which spiritual life is attached from the outside. The body is the instrument for the expression of spiritual life. So, instead of renouncing the material basis, the yogi accepts it as part of the spiritual problem.' Elaborating on the topic of āsana, he adds: 'The yogi realises that our body has a dignity of its own as much as the mind . . . The body

can be made the basis of either animal incontinence or divine strength . . . The yoga says that the perfection of the body consists in beauty, grace, strength and adamantine hardness.'[34]

Śukrāchārya in his *Śukranītisāra* enumerates various arts and includes āsanas among them.

Yoga is an art in all its aspects, from the most practical to the highest. It is a spiritual art, in the sense that it transforms the seer and brings him into contact with his inner soul. It is a fine art, since it is aesthetic, expressive, representative and imitative. It is a visual art, since the body is made to form geometrical designs, lines, architectural shapes and the like which are beautiful to behold. It is essentially a useful art for the doer and is presented as a performing art for the viewer.

The art of yoga is creative, rhythmic in practice and individualistic in nature. It is ennobling. In it the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom begins and investigation into the nature of being is carried out. As love is experienced by the lover and the beloved, wisdom by the thinker and the philosopher, so the beauty of life is analysed, known, understood and experienced by the practitioner of yoga.

12 *Yoga as Science*

Science is known as *śāstra* or *vidyā* and art is known as *kalā* (*śāstra* means order, command, precept, rule, religious or scientific treatise, any sacred book or composition of divine authority; *vidyā* means knowledge, science, learning; *kalā* means any practical, mechanical or fine art). Science is acquired knowledge and it is objective. Art is experienced knowledge; its intelligence is decisive and hence subjective.

Music is known as *sangīta śāstra* and *sangīta kalā*, dance as *nṛtya śāstra* and *nṛtya kalā*, sculpture as *śilpa śāstra* and *śilpa kalā*; yoga, too, is known as *yoga śāstra* as well as *yoga kalā*.

Like all other arts, yoga is also a science and it is a philosophy too. That is why it is called *yoga śāstra* as well as *yoga darśana*. As yoga analyses the turbulent mind and shows the ways and means of reaching the ultimate goal of freedom, it is a science (*śāstra*). As science, yoga conveys truth. On a practical level, yoga keeps the body healthy, the mind quiet and pure, and the self in beatitude. It is therefore a *darśana*. *Darśana* means vision, seeing, acting, showing, exhibiting, teaching, an aspect or semblance, a doctrine, a system of philosophy. The practical aspect of *yoga darśana* conveys the artistic aspect of yoga with its precision and beauty.

13 *Branches of Science and Art*

Science has many branches, such as physics, chemistry, nuclear science, medicine, electronics, astronomy, and so forth. So art, too, has numerous branches, such as basic art, useful art, domestic art, manual art, photography, carpentry, jewellery, architecture, painting, sculpture, poetry, drama, dance, music, fine art and divine art.

14 *Art and Science: Similarities and Differences*

Art and science are interrelated and interconnected. Both require study, imagination, discipline and an orderly method. Both depend on technique. All art is a science and all science an art. Hence it is hard to compare or differentiate between the two.

The distinction between art and science is very delicate and as sharp as a razor. They criss-cross each other at many points and yet are different in presentation.

Art in its initial stage is science; science in its highest form is art. When skill is applied to science, science becomes an art. The differences between them are few. Science is a product of intelligence, while art is not only the product of intelligence but the evolution of the soul.

Art is a form of learning. It involves imagination, practice, execution, transmission and revelation of facts. Science is a branch of systematised knowledge of any kind which speculates, investigates and reflects facts or principles in their most precise form. Art brings out quality of presentation and hence it is expressive. Through observation, experimentation and investigation, science helps one to gain knowledge. Art is prescriptive, science descriptive. Because artists are open-minded, they are quick to adopt changes. Hence directions and methods vary from one artist to another, whereas in science methods are fixed because they are organised systematically.

Art shows the ways and science the views. Though art and science are concerned with results, they have definite

techniques to follow. Each science is dependent on certain basic principles which act as guidelines: art is an exercise of assiduous activity and the intelligent use of intuitive faculties.

Science tests existing knowledge in discovering new facts and hence it is bitter-sweet. Art is pure nectar (*amṛta*). Bhavabhūti in his *Uttara Rāma Charita* says that art is filled with nectar (*amṛtāmātmanaḥ kalām*). The artist tastes the essence of knowledge (*rasātmaka jñāna*); the scientist tests and acquires it.

15 *Yoga as Philosophy*

Philosophy is a search for truth, an inquiry into the principles underlying all phenomena. It is a way of thinking and a mental training. It guides and shows a true way by which one can live a pure and noble life.

The yogi knows that all that exists is the manifestation of divinity and believes that divinity pervades all creation. As all creation, both living and non-living, manifests consciousness in different degrees and in different stages of evolution, the yogi strives to reach the roots of philosophy, which leads to perfection and shows the way to emancipation.

Yoga is Vedanta. *Veda* means knowledge or a sacred knowledge, and *anta* means frontier or end. Thus, 'Vedanta' means the end of knowledge. Yoga-Vedanta shows the way to the art of useful and fruitful living. It is a philosophy leading to the culmination of all knowledge – the art of self-realisation. When the yogi artist reaches the frontiers of self-realised knowledge through the means of finite knowledge, he merges in the infinite. Then he discards the coat of individuality and becomes universal.

16 *Yoga: The Basic Art*

Both matter and soul are said to be beginningless.[35] Though they are eternal, matter is changeable while the soul is immutable. Because of this eternal basic relationship there is energy in both. In yoga philosophy the body is known as the field (*kṣetra*) and the soul as the knower or tiller of the field (*kṣetrajña*); it is also known as the dweller in the body (*antaryāmin*), the self (*ātman*) or the individual self (*jīvātman*).

Further, the yogis divided this body into three tiers with five sheaths (*kośas*). The three tiers are known as the cause body (*kāraṇa śarīra*), the subtle or the mental body (*sūkṣma śarīra*), and the gross or the physical body (*sthūla śarīra*). In these three tiers are the five sheaths known as the anatomical (*annamaya*), the physiological (*prāṇamaya*), the mental or psychological (*manomaya*), the intellectual (*vijñānamaya*) and the blissful or spiritual (*ānandamaya*) sheaths. The first tier and the last sheath belong to the tiller or the knower of the field (*kṣetrajñan*), and the last two tiers and first four sheaths belong to the field or the body.

When a house is built, first the earth is excavated, the foundations are laid, pillars are erected and then bricks and other materials are placed one above the other symmetrically, firmly and uniformly, to provide a dwelling which may be dwelt in comfortably, securely and peacefully.

Similarly, the various aspects of yoga exist to make the dweller, the soul, live in peace in his dwelling-place, the body. The practice of *yamas* – namely non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, control of desires and non-attachment to possessions – cultivates and protects the organs of action (karmendriyas). The practice of *niyamas* – that is, health both within and without, delight in the self, desire to struggle for perfection, self-analysis and humility – disciplines the senses of perception (*jñānendriyas*). Perfect performance of innumerable āsanas keeps the entire system healthy, and *prāṇāyāma* energises the whole cellular system of the body without any break. *Pratyāhāra* stills the oscillating mind. When all these are achieved, the divine marriage takes place between the field and the knower of the field. In this way yoga is a basic art, wherein the three tiers with five sheaths are made to penetrate from the skin inwards to the self and from the self outwards to the skin as one single unit.

Thus the structure of the body, the use of energy, and the acquisition of knowledge are in the domain of yogic science. The objective analysis of the body, its practical experimentation and its experienced knowledge transcending into decisive intelligence (*vyavasāyātmika buddhi*) are in the domain of yogic art. As science, yoga is totally theoretical, objective and impersonal. As art, it is totally practical, subjective and personal.

17 *Yoga: A Spiritual Art*

Yoga kalā belongs to the field of emotions, instincts, intuitions and insights (*antaḥkaraṇa*). It is guided by the application of principles which are brought to the surface by practices and experiences so that analytical knowledge and factual knowledge are synchronised and felt. This synchronisation or harmony is the aim of all art; so it is with yoga. It is an education which refines man mentally and spiritually. Then the practitioner is elevated to a state of excellence, full of flavour, elegance and grace.

The purpose of yoga is to develop the body, discipline the mind and stabilise the emotions in order to refine man as a whole. It brings into perfect accord the disparate forces of the body, the muscles, joints, limbs, and the circulatory, respiratory, digestive, glandular and genito-excretory systems. It also integrates the senses of perception, the mind, intelligence, will-power and consciousness with the self, making them work in harmony. It puts an end to the division of body, mind and soul. In the words of the *Yoga Sūtras*, no opposites remain.[36] The end of yoga, as of art, is the attainment and expression of happiness, contentment, fulfilment, freedom and beatitude in order to reach the summit of indivisible existence. The *Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā* puts it in simple language, that yoga is the inducing of the fulfilled Self (*jīvātman*) to merge in the Universal Soul (*Paramātman*).[37]

Yoga is a psycho-spiritual subject connecting man with the object of contemplation. Lord Krishna calls it a means of achieving equanimity, harmony and balance[38] in man's power of thinking and acting. Patanjali speaks of single-minded effort and uninterrupted flow of contemplation.[39] The yogi controls and blends the movements of the body and integrates them with his consciousness, moving on towards the path of the Supreme. Yoga, according to the *Gīta*, also helps one to develop proficiency in performing actions and virtuosity in the presentation of art.[40]

The painter selects his materials, such as canvas, brushes, paints. A master musician studies composition, notes, tones and scales. A poet uses words, metres, rhymes and cadences. A sculptor selects marble, clay and tools. And a dancer chooses appropriate dynamics, rhythmic steps, costumes and scenery. Every artist needs a support for his art – lute, violin, flute, harp, piano, brush and paint, stone, or tinkling ankle bells.

In India, the lute (*vīṇa*) is considered to be the instrument of the goddess of knowledge, Saraswati, as it is a perfect instrument on which ragas can be played without any accompanying instruments. Raga is an orderly combination of fine and delicate sound vibrations conjoined with harmony, rhythm and resonance, explored by the musician through his instrument.

The yogi treats the vehicles of his self as an instrument and explores them to the maximum for the goddess of knowledge to flow in the form of intelligence to reach oneness in his body, mind and self. He compares the lute to the structure of his body. The seat of his brain is the gourd. His spine is the stem of the lute, the spinal vertebrae are the knobs and stops, and the strings are the nervous system. If the gourd is not round and firm, or if it has holes, the lute cannot be played. As the bridge of the instrument helps in vibrating the sound-box through the skill of the fingers, so the nose gives vitality through breath to the life-giving aspirations of yogis and artists, who, uniting intellectual excellence with dextrous and delicate actions, reach the heights of sublime perfection. If the bridge is not correctly placed or the strings too tight, they snap; if they are too loose, no sound can be produced. When the instrument is perfect, properly tuned, then the musician is one with his instrument and the music.

Similarly, the yogi refines his body and blends the subtle forces of this instrument with reverential devotion and uninterrupted practice[41] as an offering to the Divine. He has no canvas, brush, paints, stones, hammer or chisel, yet he chisels his own body with the āsanas, develops the senses by ethics, stores energy through breath, and with superb and supreme beauty tones the consciousness with the brilliance of the inner cosmic rays, or with the radiant light of his soul. He and his abode become one and henceforth the body becomes his heaven on earth.

18 *Yoga and Yogi: An Example*

The difference between the art of yoga and other arts is that in yoga the practitioner lives in deep silence and turns inwards to behold and experience the inner hidden light and beauty wherein unalloyed truth and wisdom dwell.[42] His work is his own art of life. Other artists follow the example of the inner light, beauty and wisdom of the yogis. They portray externally the radiant mien, exalted demeanour and deep serenity of the yogi as expressions of their art. Thus the yogi is an example to others as he conquers the body, the senses and the mind and integrates them with the soul. He lives in total freedom, develops insight (*antar dṛṣṭi*) and acquires illuminating knowledge which he uses for creating new dimensions to his expressions. When this is accomplished, he moves from the known to the unknown, from the apparent to the real, until at last the body (*kṣetra*) is welded with the knower of the body – the soul (*kṣetrajñan*) – in divine union. This divine union comes only by practice and by the grace of the Radiant Light of God.

As Lord Krishna says, 'Whatever being is born, know that it springs through the union of the field of nature or body (*kṣetra*) with the knower of the field of nature or body (*kṣetrajñan*), or the individual soul (*jīvātman*).'[43] So, through the faculty of insight, the creative power of the yogi-artist goes on springing from the inner well until he reaches the culmination of true and pure art.

References to Part One

The following abbreviations are used:

YS = *Yoga Sūtras* of Patanjali
HP = *Haṭha Yoga Pradīpikā*
BG = *Bhagavad Gīta*
AS = *Ahirbudhnya Saṁhitā*

1 Maitrī karuṇā muditopekṣāṇām sukhaduḥkha puṇyāpuṇya viṣayāṇām bhāvanātaścittaprasādanam YS I.33
2 Sthirasukhamāsanam YS II.46
3 Viṣayavatī vā pravṛttirutpannā manasaḥ sthitinibandhinī YS I.35
4 Rūpalāvaṇyabalavajrasaṁhananatvāni kāyasaṁpat YS III.46
5 Vapuḥ kṛśātvam vadane prasannatā nādasphuṭatvaṁ nayane sunirmale arogatā bindujayognidīpanaṁ nāḍīviśuddhirhaṭhasiddhilakṣaṇam HP II.78
6 Tapaḥsvādhyāyeśvarapraṇidhānāni kriyāyogaḥ YS II.1
7 Prayatnaśaithilyānantasamāpattibhyām YS II.47
8 Yogāṅgānuṣṭhānādaśuddhikṣaye jñānadīptirāvivekakhyāteḥ YS II.28
9 Svapnanidrājñānālambanaṁ vā YS I.38
10 'Art: Revelation of Beauty'
11 'Art: Revelation of Beauty'
12 Published by Oxford University Press, translated by Alymer Mande (1930)
13 Yathābhimata dhyānādvā YS I.39
14 Tasya vācakaḥ praṇavaḥ YS I.27
15 Tajjapaḥ tadarthabhāvanam YS I.28
16 Tatra śabdārthajñānavikalpaiḥ saṅkīrṇā savitarkā samāpattiḥ YS I.42
17 Śrutānumānaprajñābhyāmanyaviṣayā viśeṣārthatvāt YS I.49
18 Pratyakṣānumānāgamāḥ pramāṇāni YS I.7
19 Vyādhistyānasaṁśayapramādālasyāviratibhrāntidarśanā-labdhabhūmikatvānavasthitatvāni cittavikṣepāste antarāyāḥ YS I.30
20 Duḥkhadaurmanasyāṅgamejayatva śvāsapraśvāsā vikṣepasahabhuvaḥ YS I.31
21 Heyaṁ duḥkhamanāgatam YS II.16
22 Smṛtipariśuddhau svarūpaśūnyeva arthamātranirbhāsā nirvitarkā YS I.43
23 Yadyadvibhūtimatsattvam śrīmad ūrjitameva vā tattadevā 'vagaccha tvam mama tejoṁśasaṁbhavam BG X.41
24 Tadā draṣṭuḥ svarūpe 'vasthānam YS I.3
25 Atha yogānuśāsanam YS I.1

26 Abhyāsavairāgyābhyāṁ tannirodhaḥ YS I.12
27 Yamaniyamāsanaprāṇāyāmapratyāhāra dhāraṇādhyāna samādhayo'ṣṭāvaṅgāni YS II.29
28 Śraddhāvīryasmṛtisamādhiprajñāpūrvaka itareṣām YS I.20
29 Tasya praśāntavāhitā saṁskārāt YS III.10
30 Tatpratiṣedhārthamekatattvābhyāsaḥ YS I.32
31 Tataḥ paramā vaśyatendriyāṇām YS II.55
32 Prasankhyāne'pyakusīdasya sarvathā vivekakhyāter dharmameghaḥ samādhiḥ YS IV.29
33 *Cultural Heritage of India* (published by Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture).
34 *Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 2 (published by George Allen Unwin, London)
35 Prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁcaiva viddhyanādī ubhāvapi vikārāṁśca guṇāṁścaiva viddhi prakṛtisaṁbhavān BG XIII.19
36 Tato dvandvānabhighātaḥ YS II.48
37 Samyogo yoga ityakto jīvātmaparamātmanoho AS XXXI.15
38 Samatvaṁ yogaucyate BG II.48
39 Tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam YS III.2
40 Yogaḥ karmasu kauśalaṁ BG II.50
41 Sa tu dīrghakālanairantaryasatkāra āsevito dṛḍhabhūmiḥ YS I.14
42 Ṛtaṁbharā tatra prajñā YS I.48
43 Kṣetrakṣetrajña saṁyogāt tadviddhibharatarṣabha BG XIII.26

PART TWO
YOGA: THE ART OF TEACHING

Yoga has been defined as both an art and a science so any introduction to a chapter on the Art of Teaching must consider both. What follows will serve as a guide to those who wish to teach.

Yoga is an art learnt by practising, but it is used as a science while teaching. Teaching requires technical words to express precisely that which has been experienced. The human body has an infinitely complex structural formation. It has about 300 joints, 700 muscles, 6,000 miles of nerves and 60,000 miles of blood vessels contained within a structure just 5 or 6 feet high. It has numerous organs, plexuses and glands functioning in a co-ordinated way. In addition, the exact structure of each individual differs. Hence, a study of anatomy and physiology is essential to obtain a scientific background to the physiological formation of the Āsanas, so that knowledge gained by experience and observation can be translated into words. I started by experimenting on myself before sharing my new approach with others.

As life had taught me to be dispassionate, I was able to observe the moods and minds of people and I became skilled at adapting this art of Yoga to suit the needs of each individual even in large classes. This, combined with the study of human anatomy and physiology, helped me to transmit my communion with the art by apt terminology. Hence, this chapter illustrates how the value of the art is enhanced by right expression and the qualities that are needed for one to grow as a talented teacher.

Art requires tremendous self-discipline. Therefore one wishing to take up yoga as an art should know that it demands discipline and the teacher should train him from the very beginning to develop this. Self-discipline involves the will to practise, to improve, to suffer pains and discomfort in pursuance of the art. It means giving up distracting activities and interests, as an artist cannot allow himself to be distracted. Yogic art presupposes a pursuit of virtue, for this gives the mental clarity and purity which are consistent with the highly idealistic yogic way of life. Beauty in life creates beauty in art.

All art, though disciplined, is creative and the teacher

must allow the student the freedom to be creative. Creativity brings joy and fulfilment. Once mastery is attained, the artist feels that the art is his own, that it is his means of self-expression and his way of life. He acts as a vehicle or an instrument towards higher and nobler aspirations in life. He inspires men to share his vision through his talented gifts.

Art is at all times an exacting muse, never satisfied. No sooner is a goal attained than the next one appears in view. It is a never-ending process: as one crosses beyond the known, the unknown, too, recedes into the distance. The known has a frontier, whereas the unknown is limitless, boundless. So art is limitless. Therefore, if an artist is content, then that satisfaction is illusory, for it is followed by a fall. In yoga it is said that achievement is easy, but to maintain the achievement is difficult. I think it is the same with all other arts.

Art demands constant attentive practice (*nirantarābhyāsa*). For this reason the yogi-artist knows that he has to develop a sense of self-observation regardless of immediate success or failure. He proceeds in his efforts through breath control (*prāṇāyāma*) and concentration (*dhāraṇā*). *Prāṇāyāma* helps him to be quick in mind to observe the subtle nuances of his various movements and actions. It brings him emotional stability and wisdom to discriminate. Concentration makes him absorbed in his art for its own sake. The art is his path as well as his goal.

Art is the goddess of knowledge. She can bestow favour or withhold it. The artist must humbly wait until she chooses to grace him. Without this humility there is no progress or learning, no fusion of art, nor can he become an artist. The teacher cultivates in the pupil a clean and clear mind so that he and his mind may be blended as one with the art. The pupil, too, should strive for the development of purity in art by discipline. He should admit into his thoughts all that is good, elevating and auspicious, and discard the superficially pleasant. In order to rise to the heights of the art he must learn to surmount his faults and weaknesses. Then he will not know whether he has impelled himself to perfection by his own zeal and effort or whether the art has chosen to flow in him in all her vibrancy, vigour and purity.

In the field of yoga, the teacher guides and trains the *sādhaka* and brings to the surface his unknown hidden gifts and skills. Through these he transforms him to go into the refinement in the work of art. He presents various means of approach with brilliant techniques to provide a sound basis for the student to practise unceasingly so that he reaches perfection. He also taps his pupil's intelligence and instils in him the energy for greater application so that his mind and

body are moulded by hard work and constant vigilance. In this way the *sādhaka* gains mobility and proficiency. He is now converted into a dedicated artist to grasp the artistic subtleties through which he is made to express his art with skill and grace, finesse and beauty.

The teacher sets the high standards and points the way to bring the distant goal nearer. His teaching is by example and precept. He is the guide, the guru who teaches the *sādhaka* to stand well, to walk and to leap. He must have skill to know the student's needs which the student cannot assess for himself. He teaches with love and has the pupil's interests at heart. He is firm, exacting and draws the best out of the pupil. As parents bring up their child, so the teacher uplifts the student from moment to moment. The talent of the teacher lies in correcting the student in the twinkling of an eye, in taking him by surprise. The pupil should treasure these corrections. Such is the quality of the teacher who uplifts the student to acquire artistic insight and vision to soar towards his goal – perfection and mastery.

In the art of teaching yoga, the teacher encourages the pupil to think and feel for himself, explore the body and experiment with the postures, study life and nature, delve deeply into yoga and its philosophy of life. The teacher builds in the pupil the power to be an examiner not only of his own self but also of his fellow practitioners, so that he is inspired to measure the sensitivity, the subtlety and the vastness in the field of yoga.

In art, self-discipline and right application in effort act as the two wings of the artist by which he rises to lofty heights. Effort is the propelling force which spurs one with the power of will and strength to start on one's chosen art. It is an energetic endeavour to combat weaknesses, moods and pessimism.

Effort is of two types, mechanical and dynamic. Mechanical involvement is repetitious; it is habit-forming and brings some mobility but no enlightenment. Dynamic effort is total, signifying a single-minded and intense approach. Such intensity is essential for success. At this stage the artist-*sādhaka* stands alone, with a balanced state of mind (*samāhita citta*) in the face of opposition and competition, but ever sensitive to his art.

Life has its stumbling-blocks and so does yoga, which is true to life. They may be physical or mental, one influencing the other. The teacher indicates these and helps the pupil to face and to overcome them. For instance, in physical arts, including yoga, there is a risk of physical injury. This, besides being painful, brings mental dejection and depression. Serenity and poise are disturbed. For example,

if a muscle is torn through ignorance, heedlessness or over-enthusiasm, the *sādhaka* is guided by the teacher in the structure of the injured part in depth, for skilful treatment. He is shown how the affected part is to be supported and worked carefully, correctly and precisely to assist the healing force of nature. He is taught to perform other postural work so that the sensitivity of intelligence is kept flowing, to maintain the essence of art.

Mental pains are caused by lack of inner awareness. The *Bhagavad Gīta* states that desire, anger and greed (*kāma, krodha, lobha*) are three things which are to be avoided as they open the gates of mental suffering. They create external and internal turmoil, stop one's artistic functioning and prevent one totally from reaching the higher aim in life. The teacher guides the student to recognise them and then to be free from them. This generates in the student a peace of mind which helps him to commune with his art.

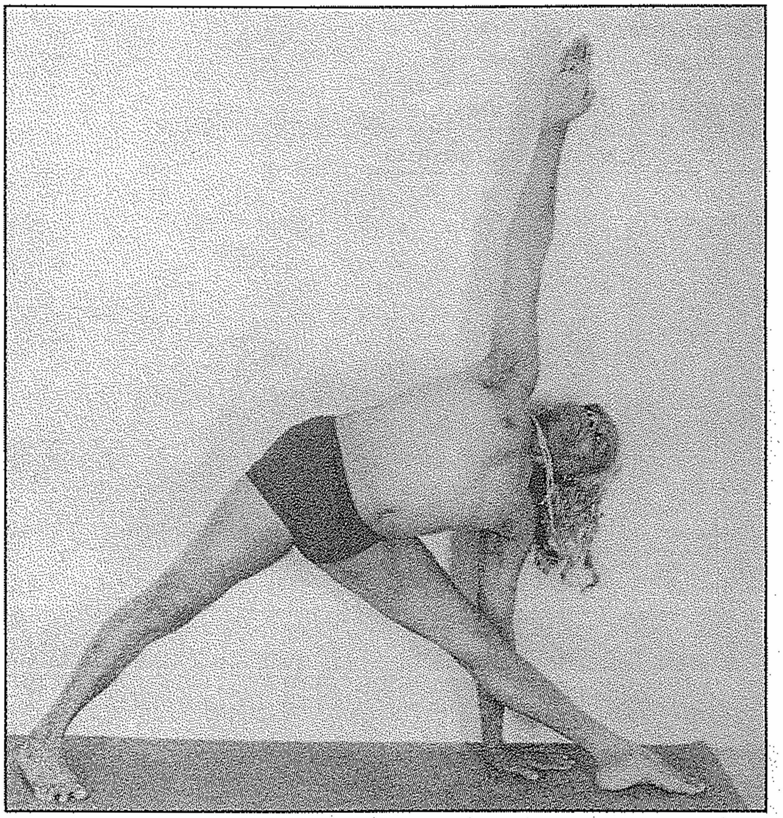
Then his art blossoms, with fullness of beauty, truth and purity. He feels he is enriched by his art in a new way. He uplifts man and society through the magic charm of his art.

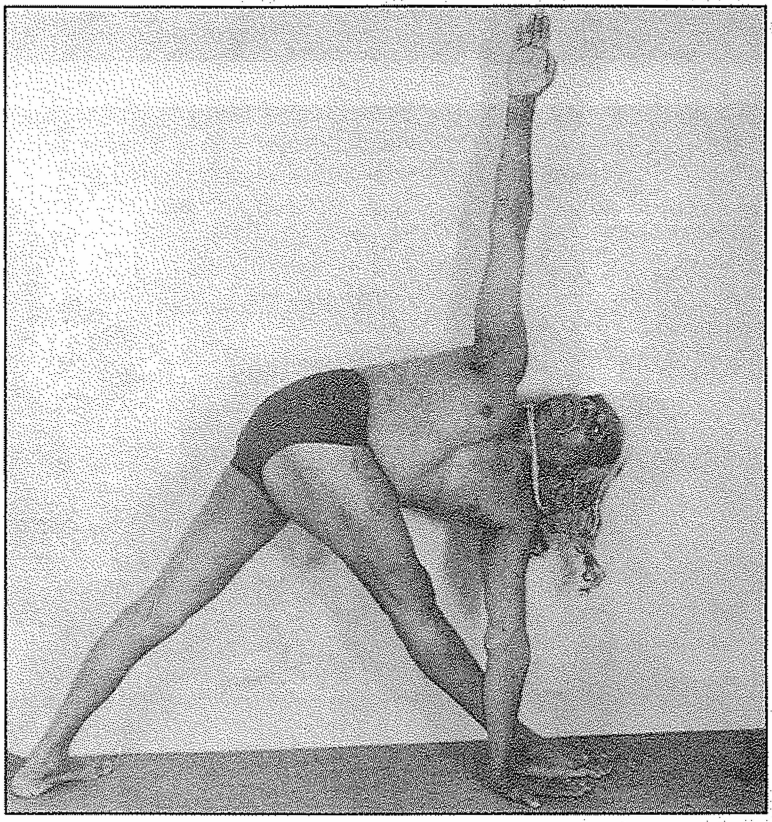
PART THREE
THE ASANAS

Divine Triangle of Body, Mind and Soul

1 Utthita Trikoṇāsana

2 Parivṛtta Trikoṇāsana

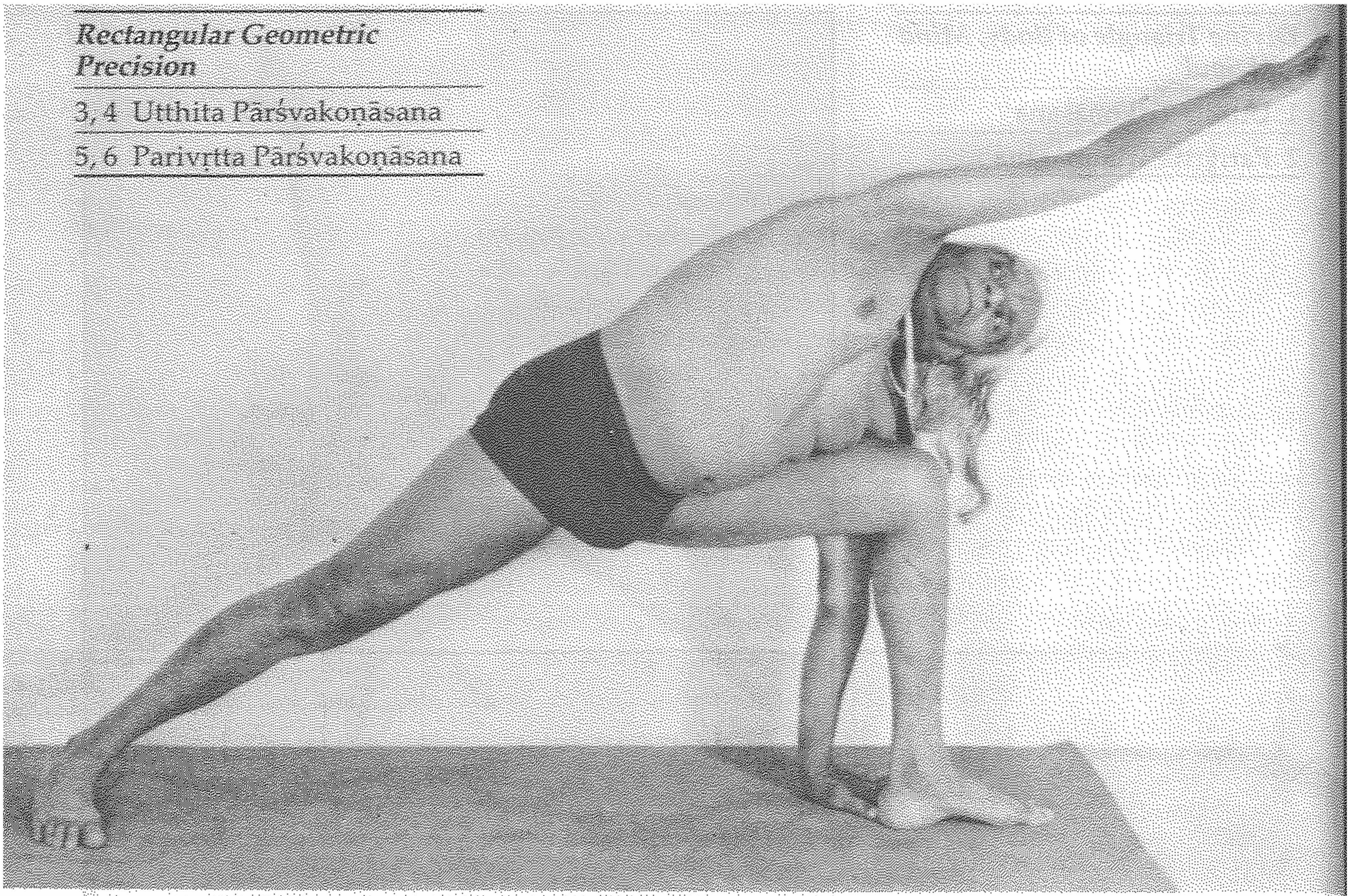


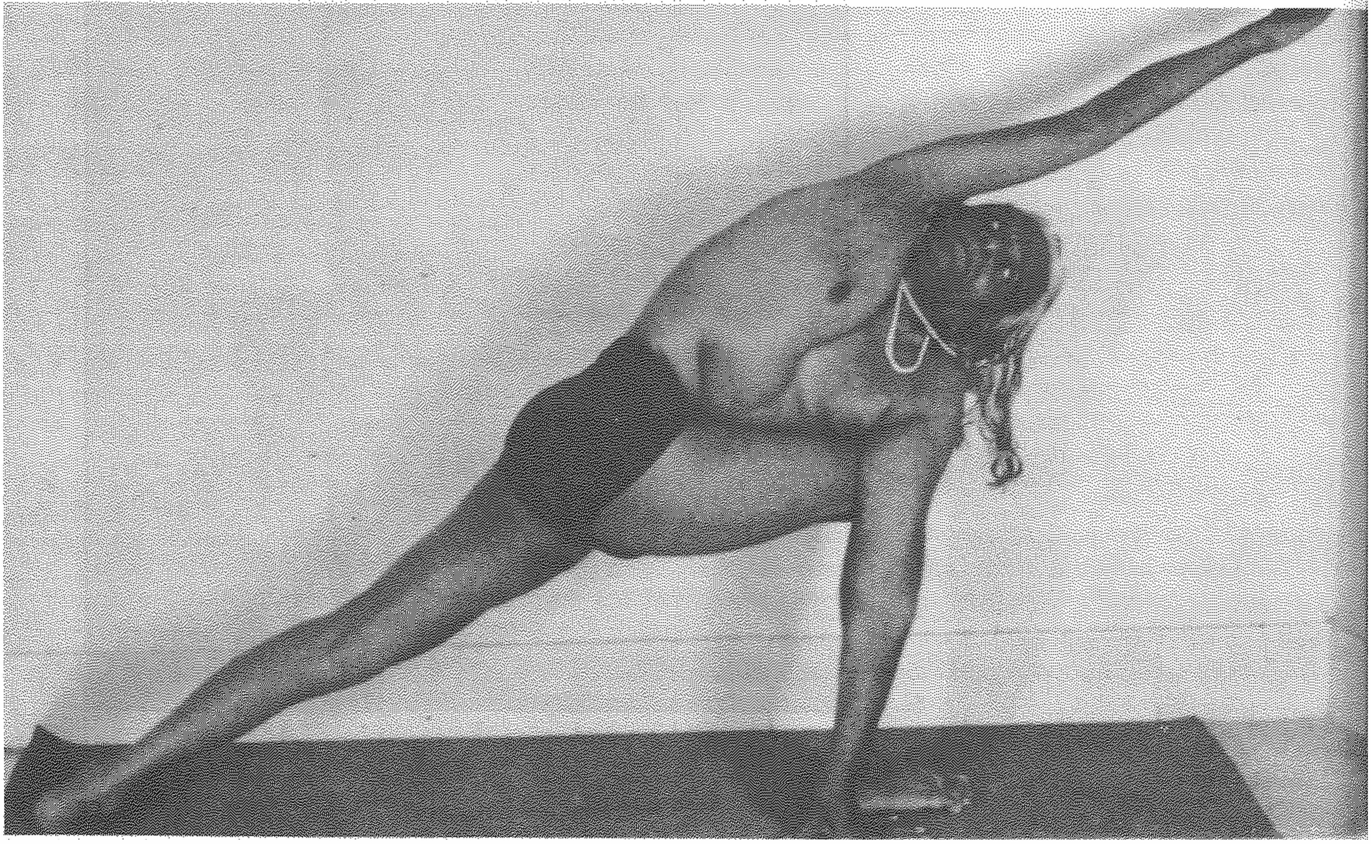


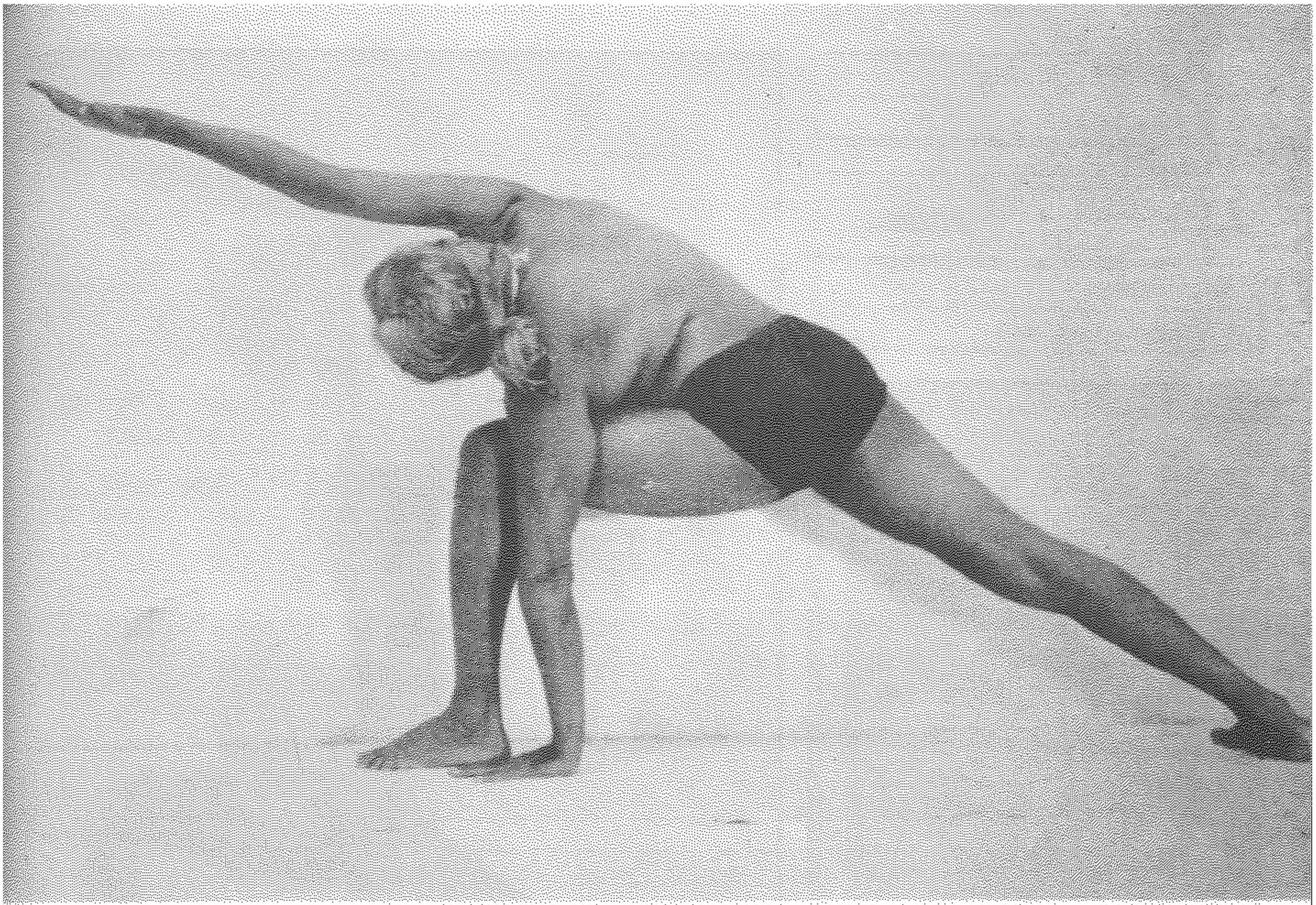
Rectangular Geometric Precision

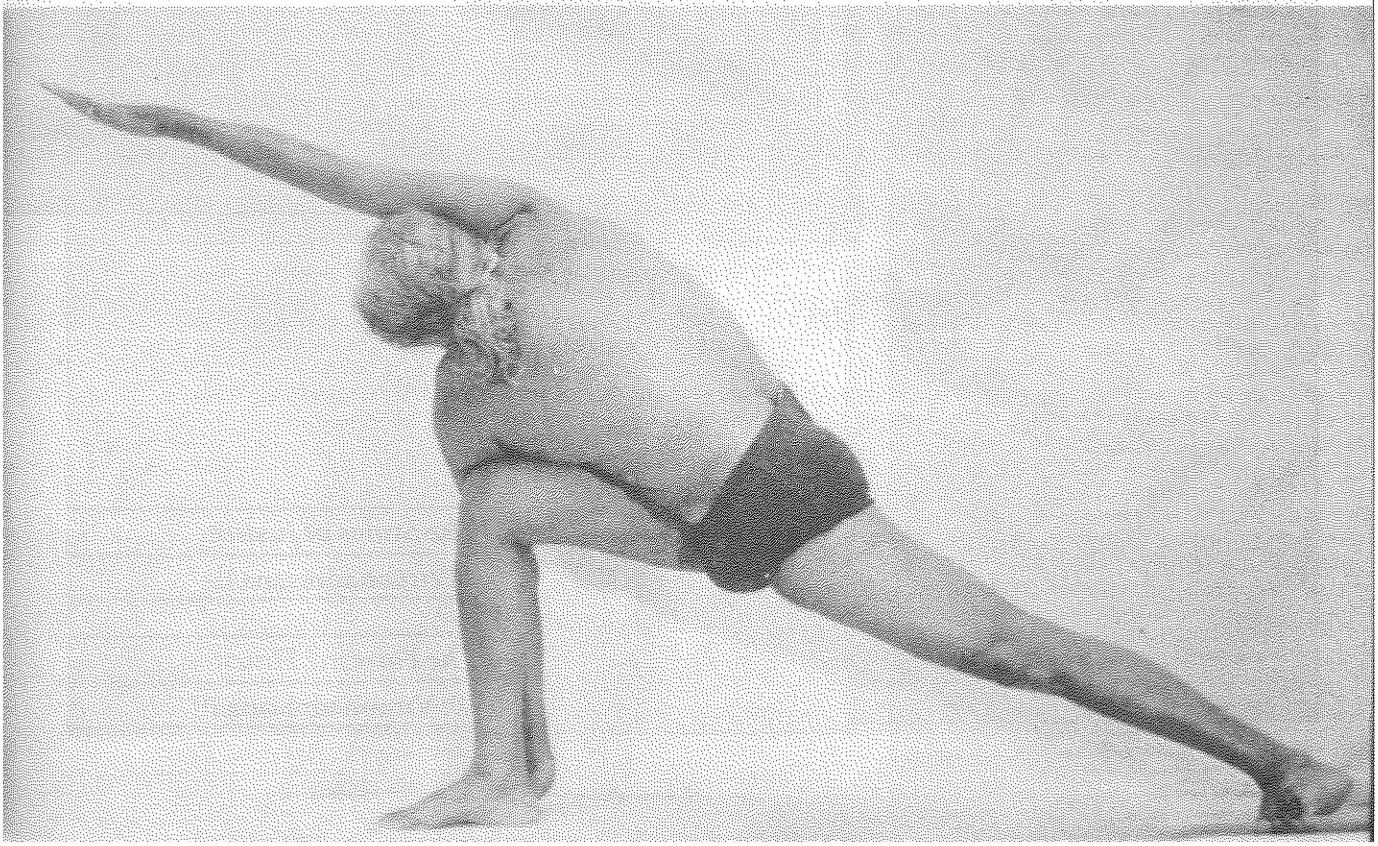
3, 4 Utthita Pārśvakoṇāsana

5, 6 Parivṛtta Pārśvakoṇāsana







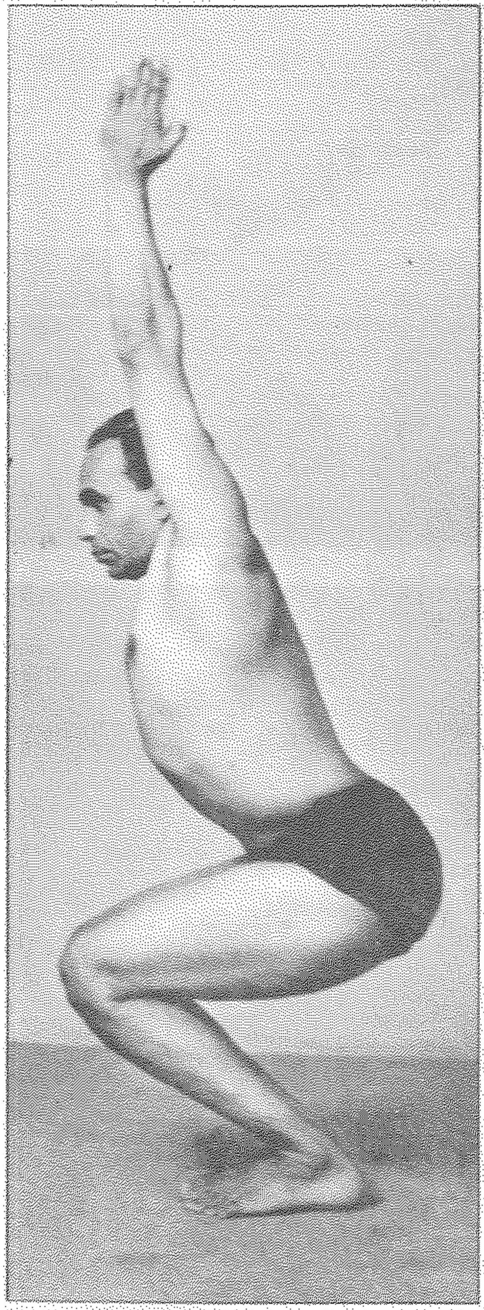


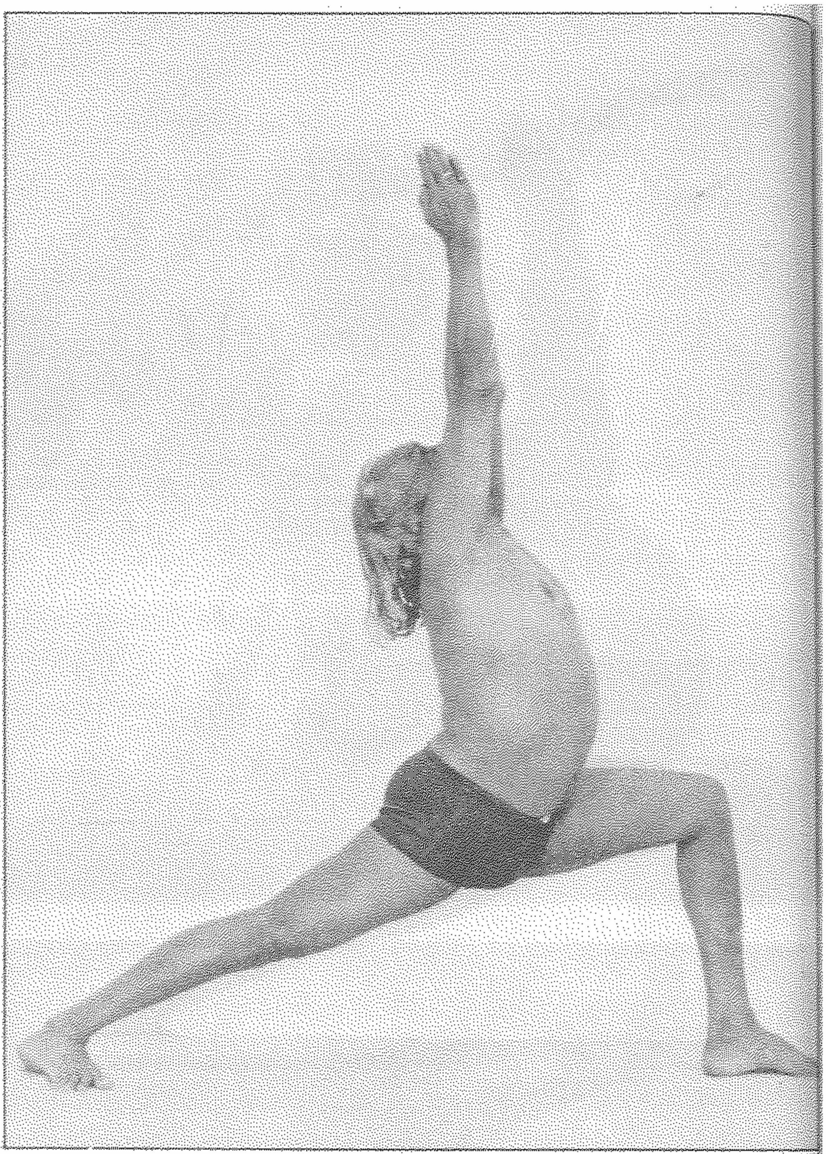
Flash of Lightning

7 Utkaṭāsana

Invocation

8 Vīrabhadrāsana I



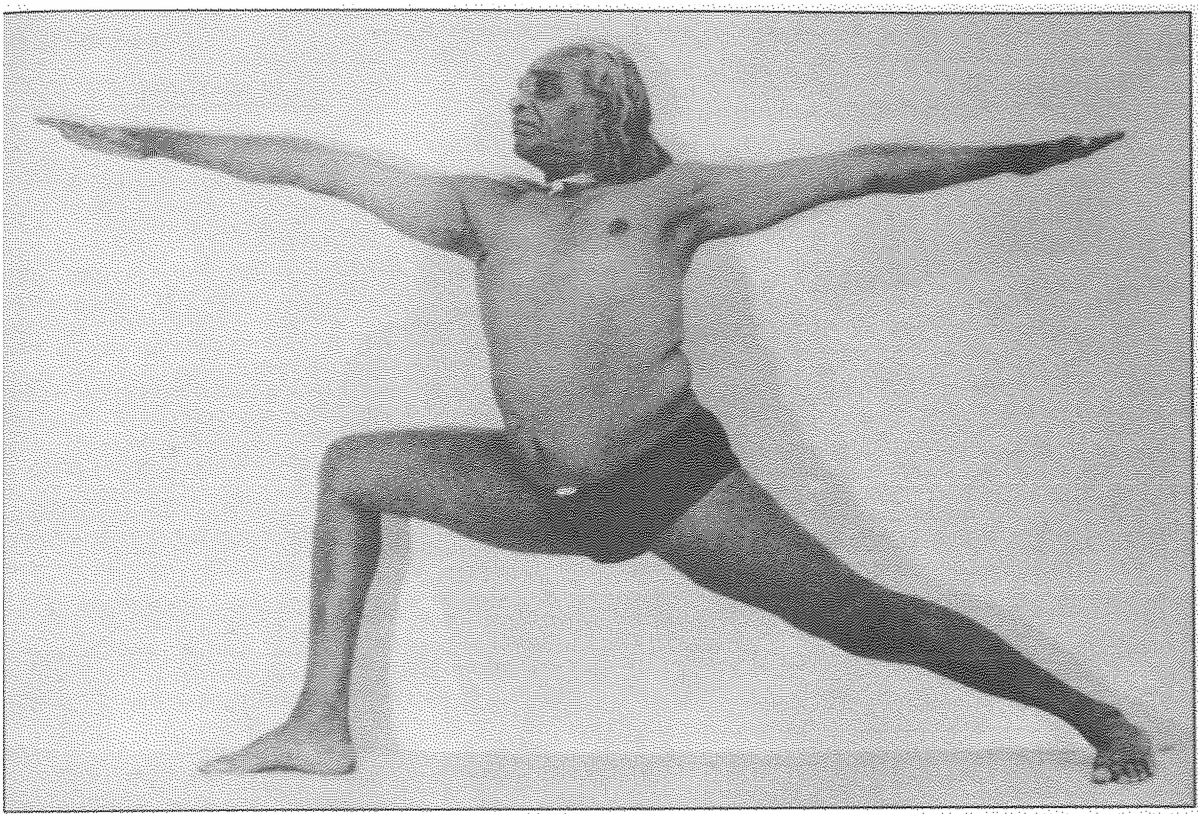


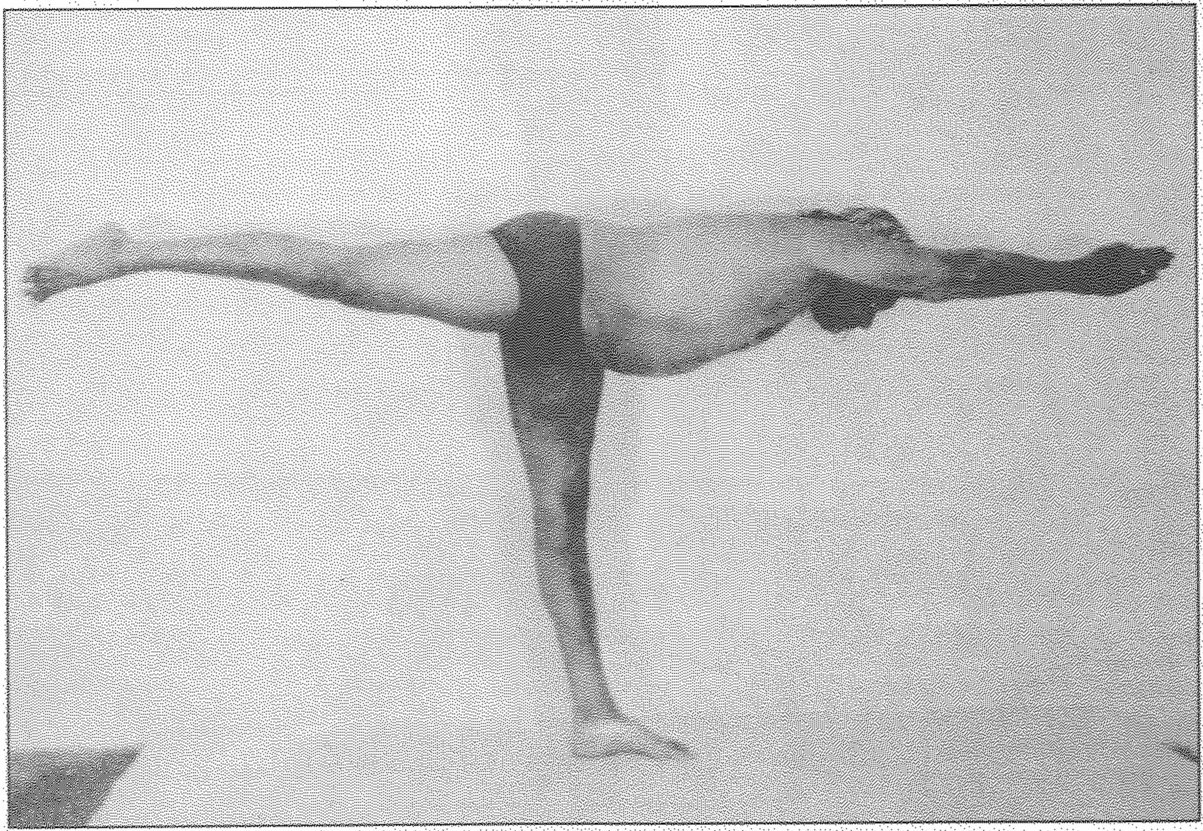
The Scales of Justice

9 Vīrabhadrāsana II

The Forward Thrust

10 Vīrabhadrāsana III

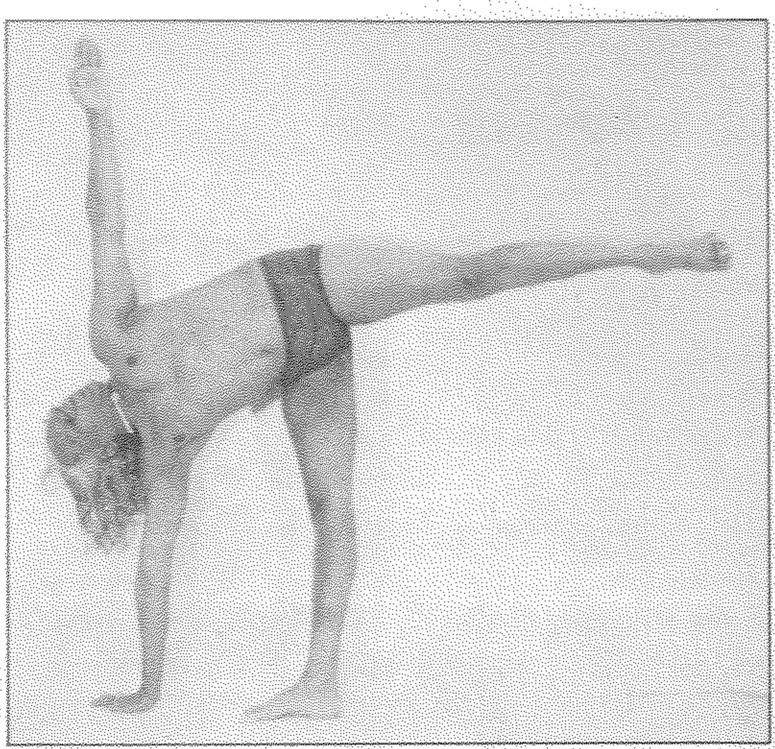




11 Virabhadrāsana III

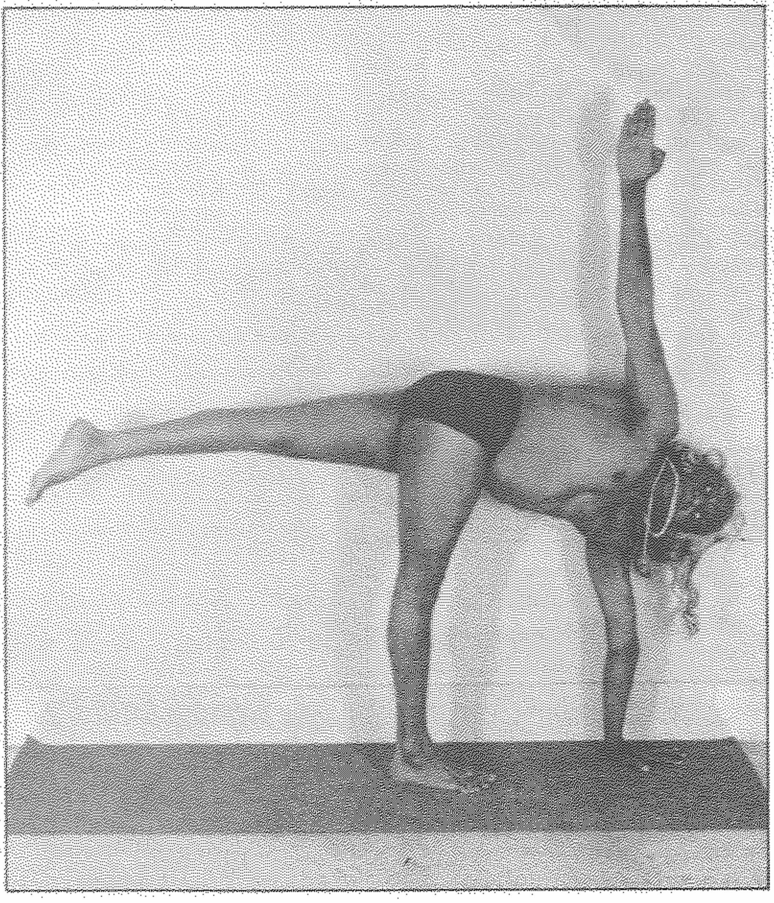
The Moonbeam

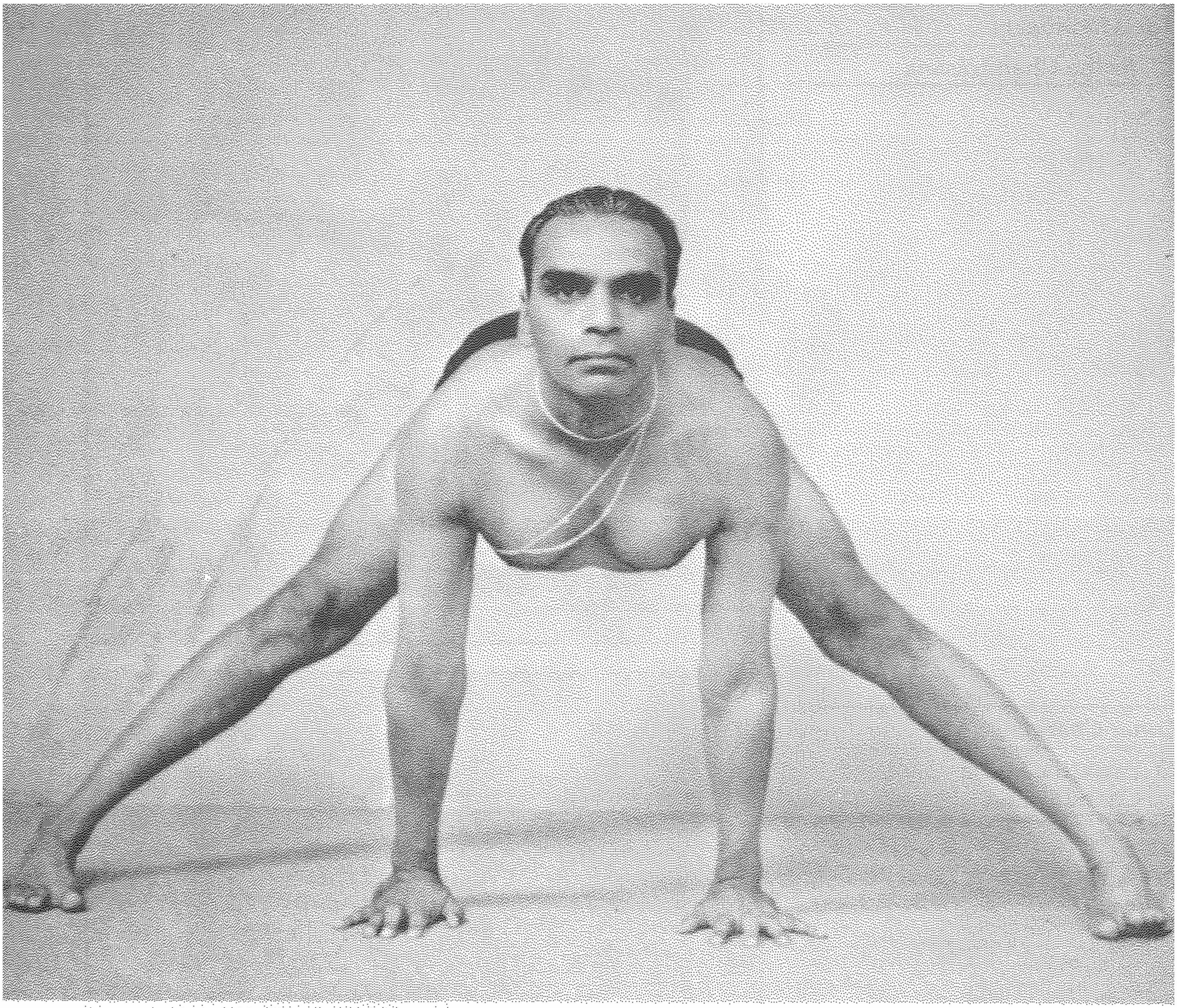
12 Ardha Chandrāsana



Lunar Charm

13 Parivṛtta Ardha Chandrāsana



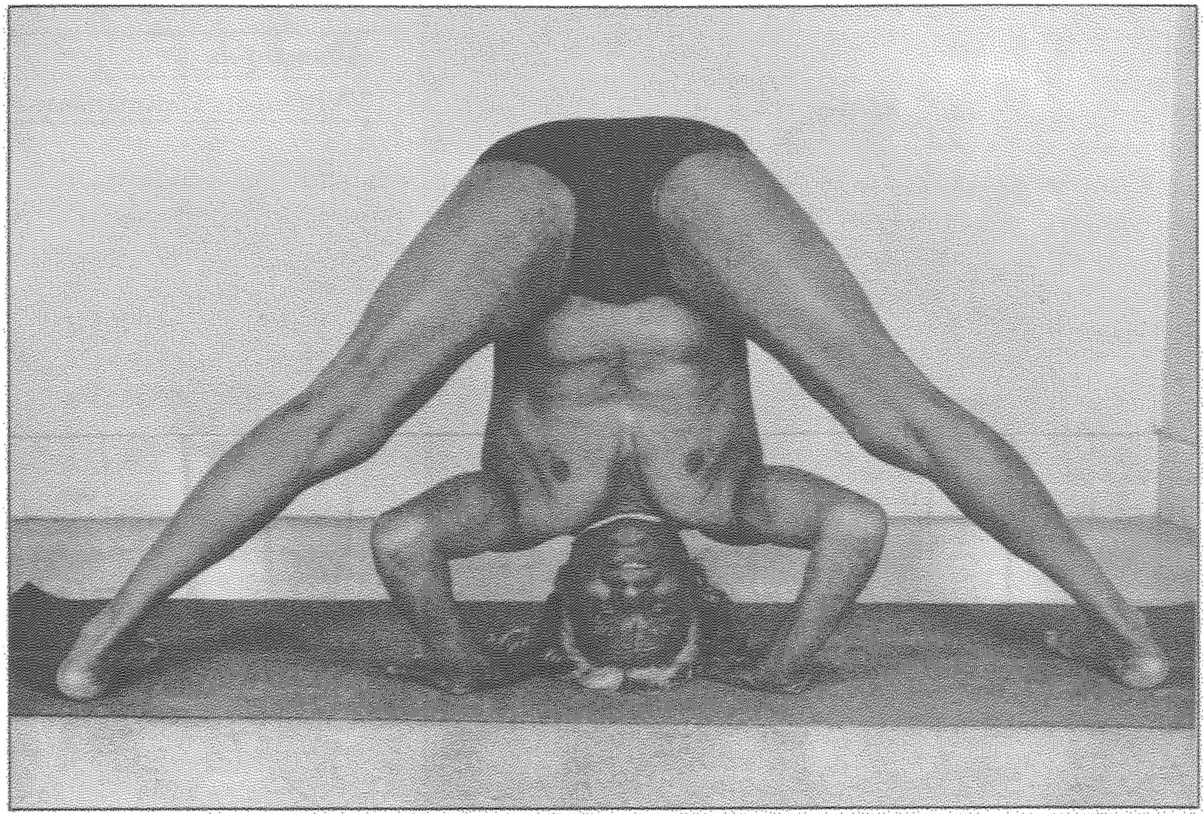


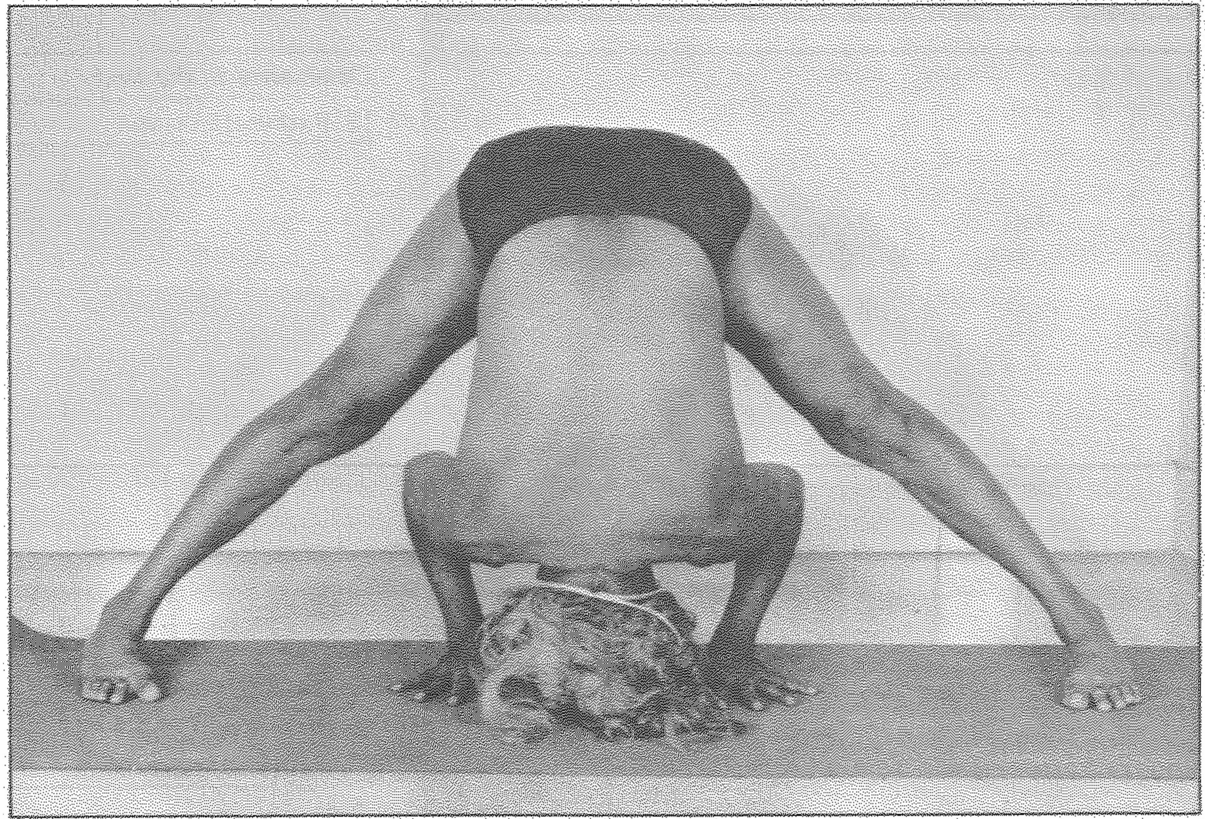
The Sphinx

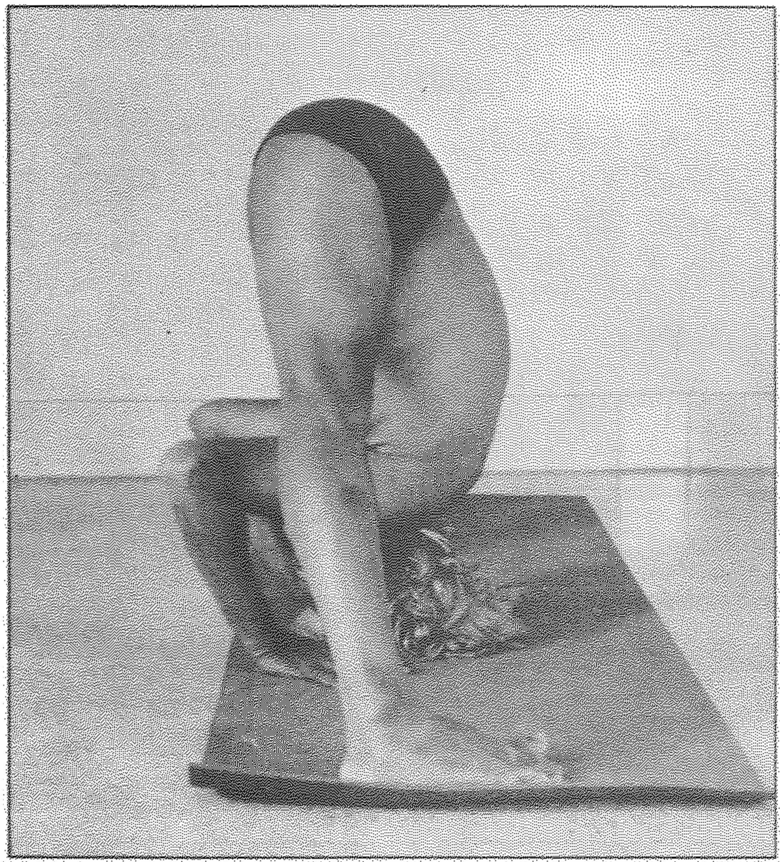
14 Prasārita Pādottānāsana

Ascent and Descent

15, 16 Prasārita Pādottānāsana

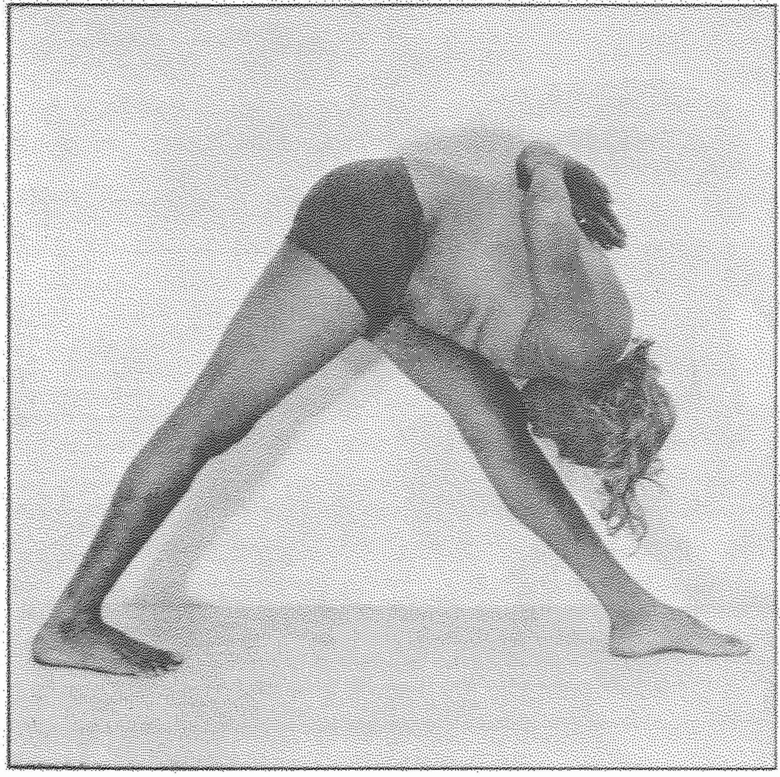






Adamantine

17 Prasārita Pādottānāsana

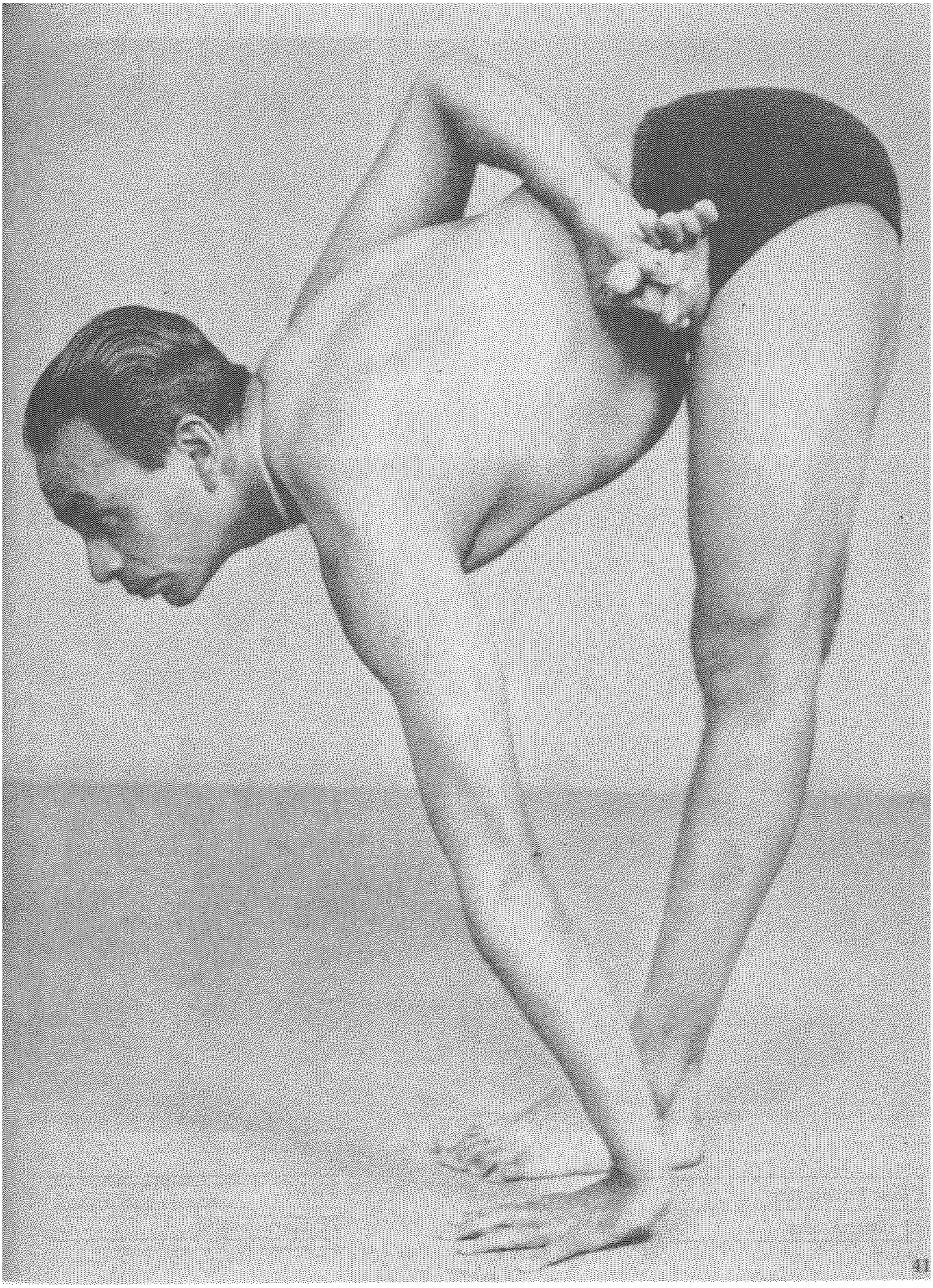


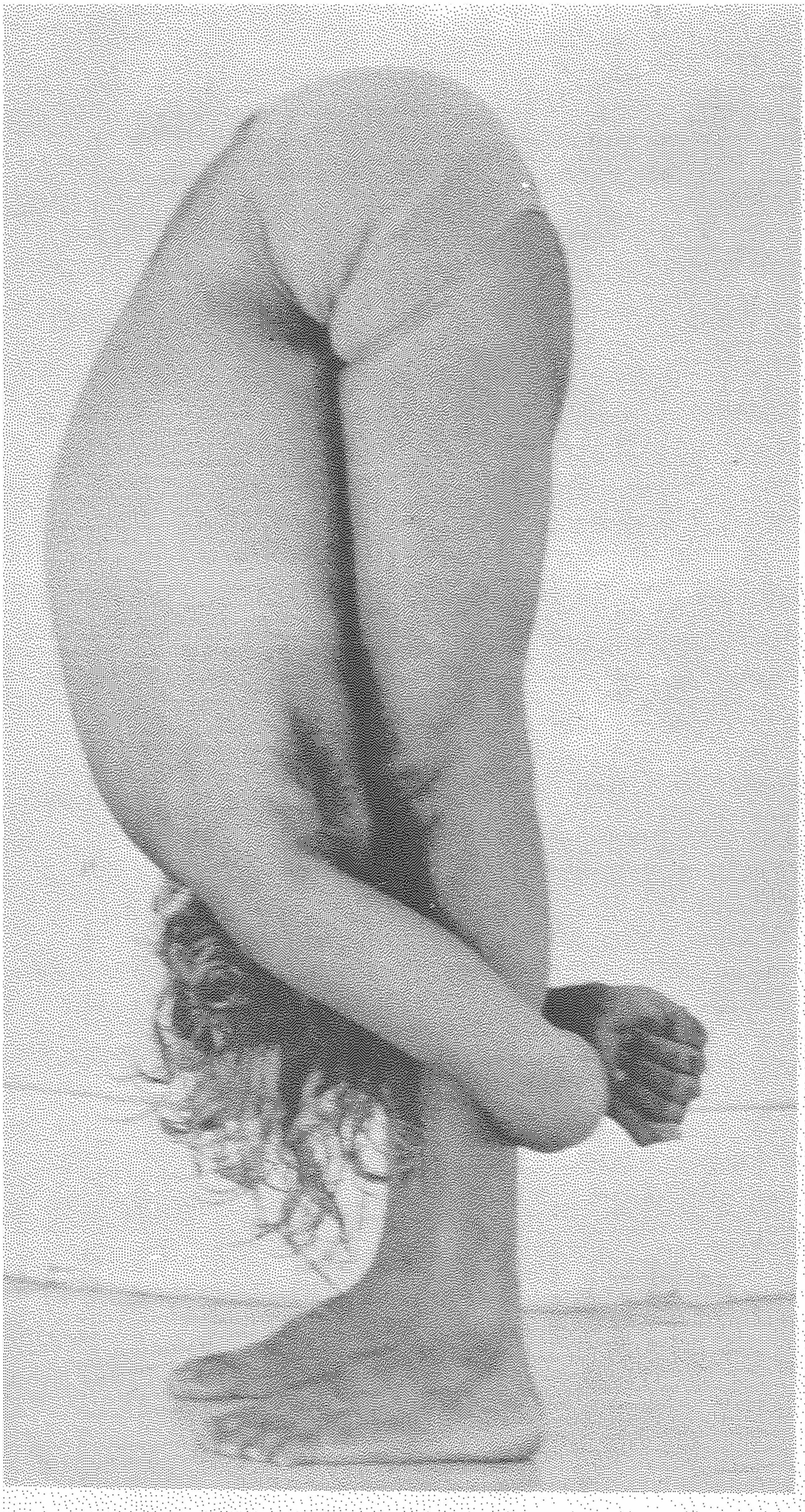
Obeisance to the Body

18 Pārśvottānāsana

Spree

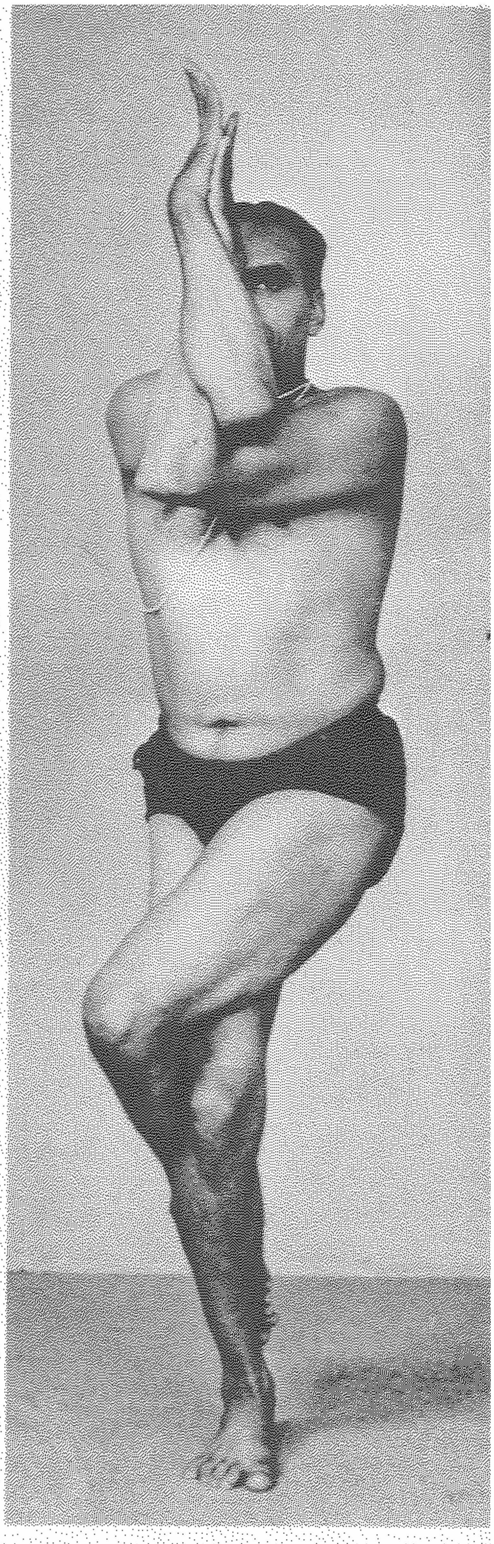
19 Ardha Baddha
Padmottānāsana





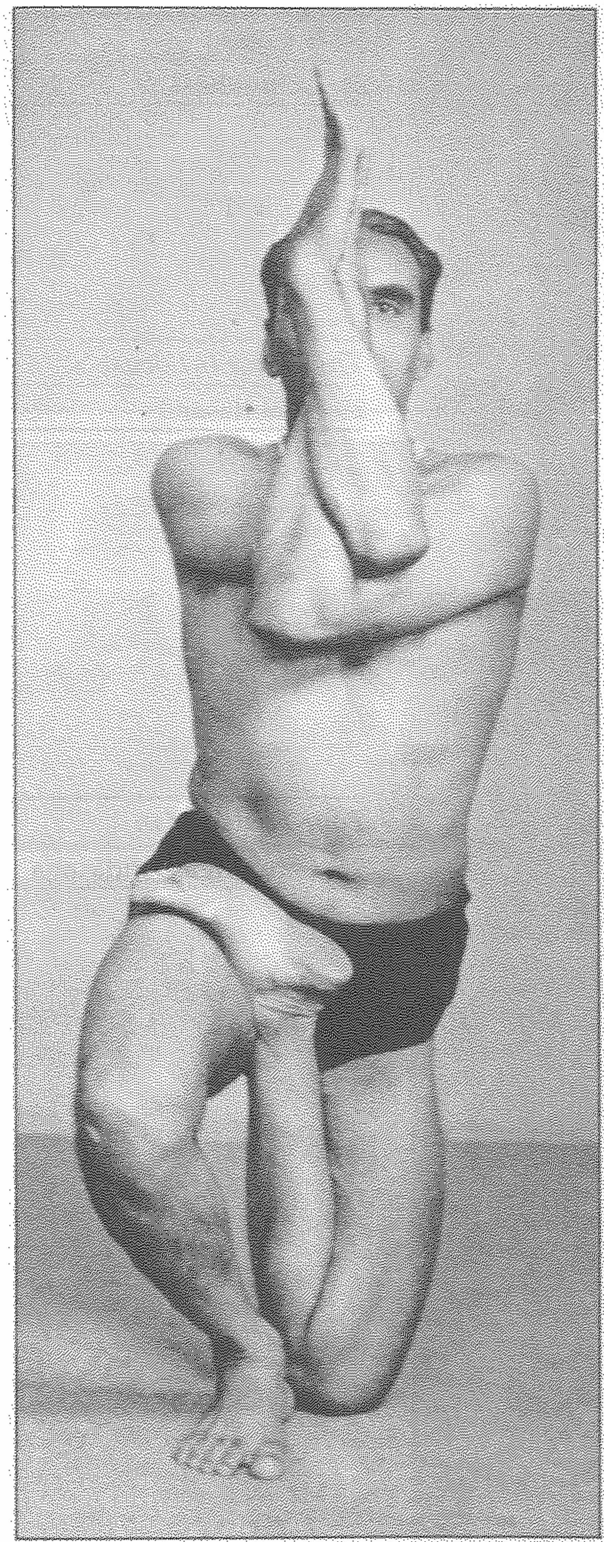
Close Encounter

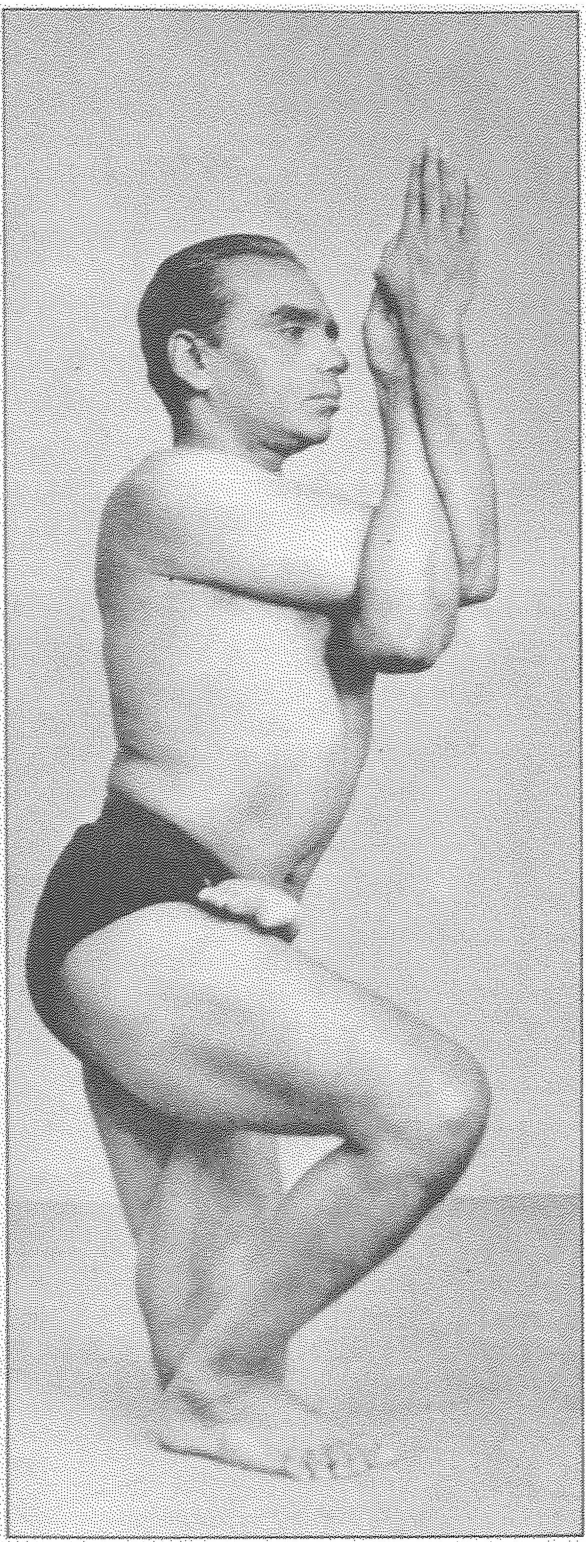
20 Uttānāsana



Twirl

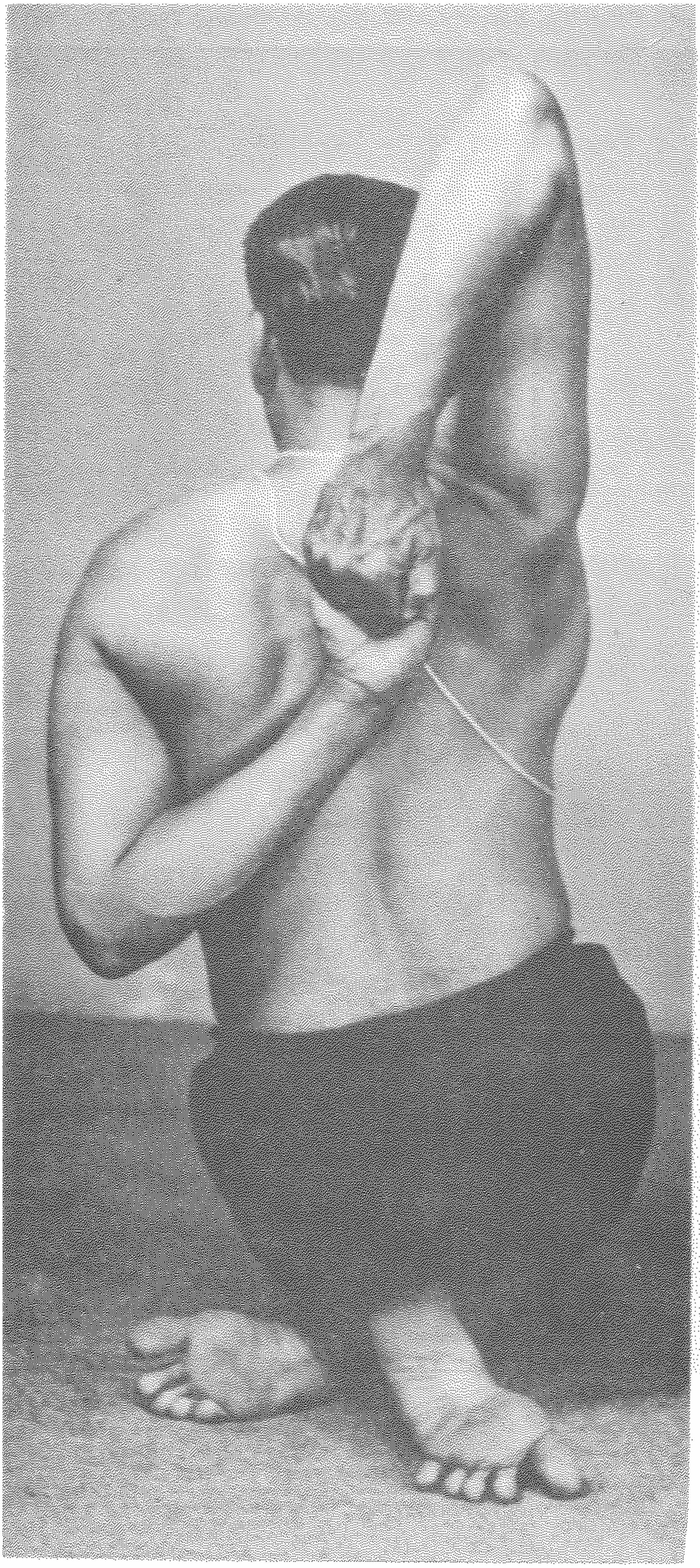
21 Garuḍāsana





Equestrian Grace

22, 23 Vātāyanāsana



Holy Cross

24 Gomukhāsana

Thy Name Is Locust

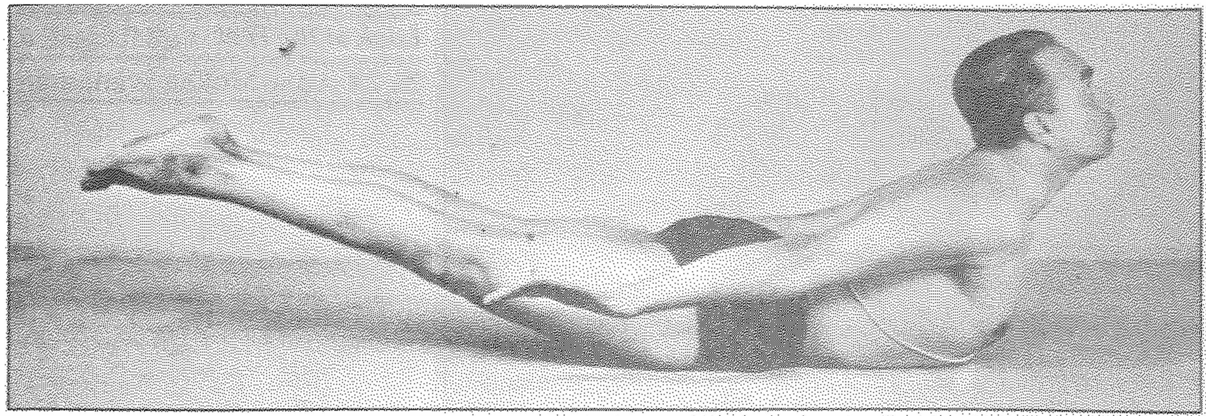
25 Śalabhāsana

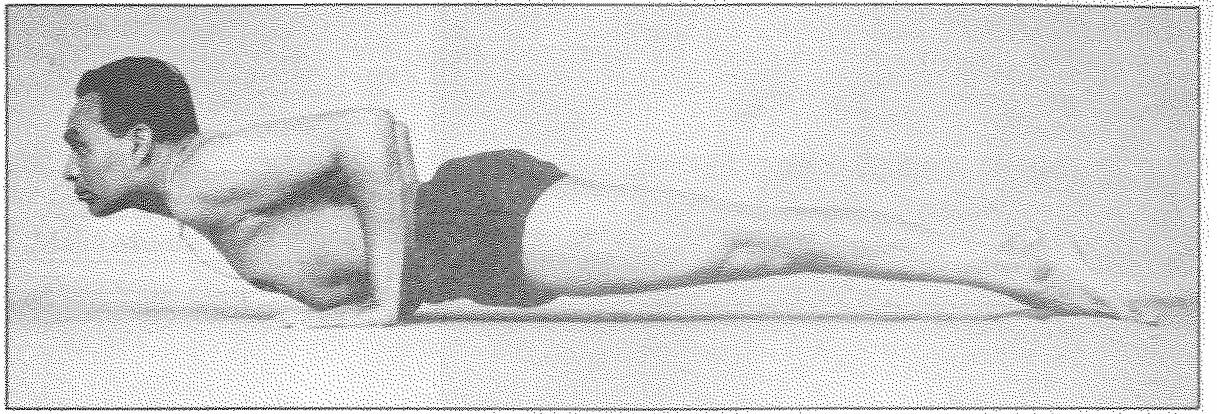
Four-Footed Man

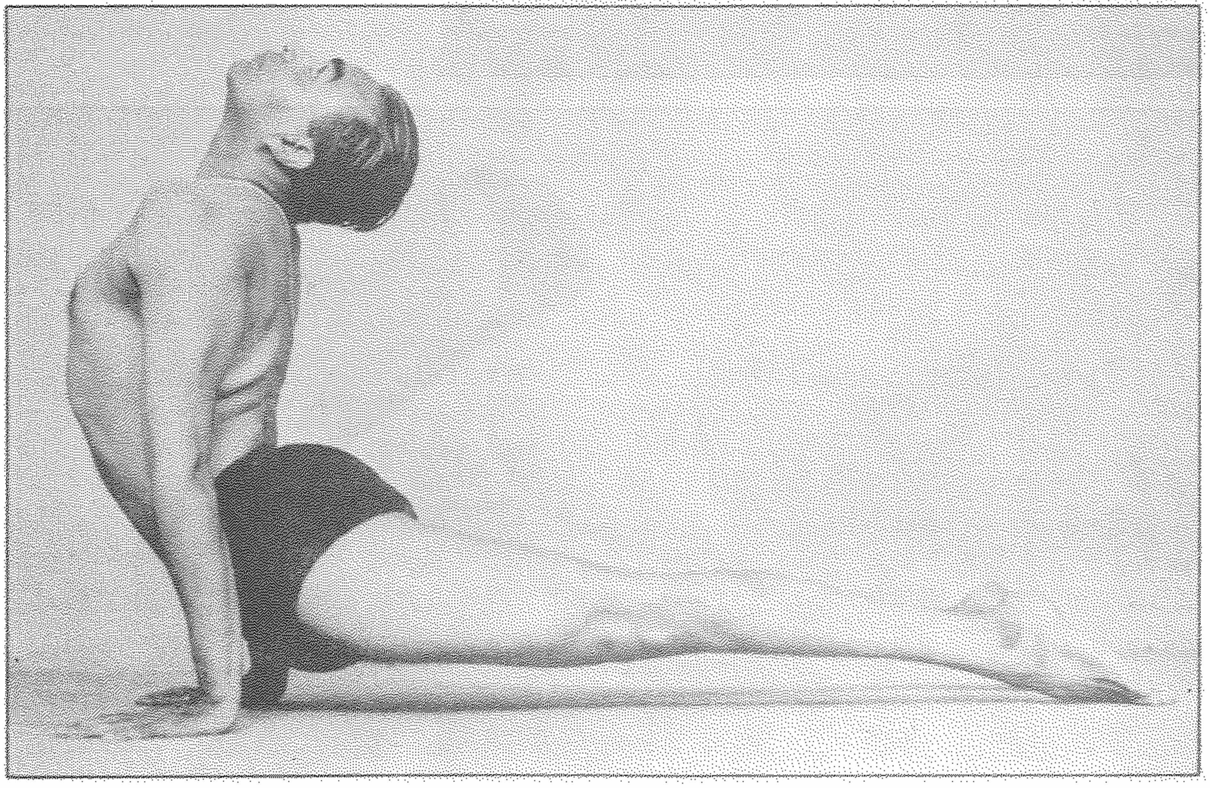
26 Caturanga Daṇḍāsana

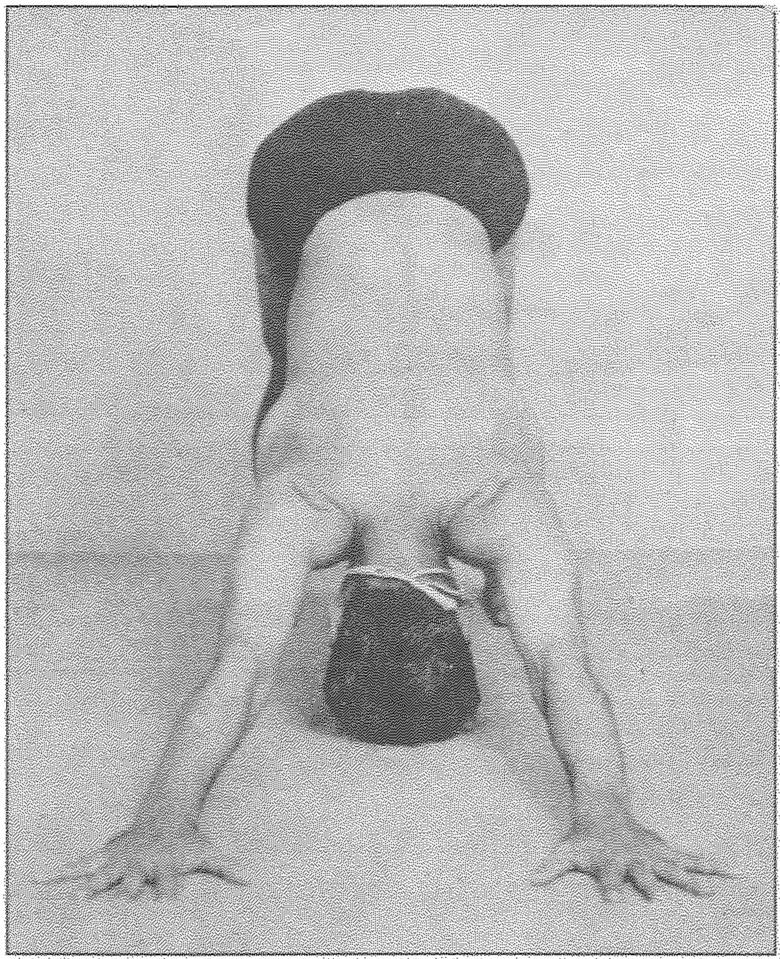
Imitation of Man's Most Trusted Friend

27 Ūrdhva Mukha Śvānāsana



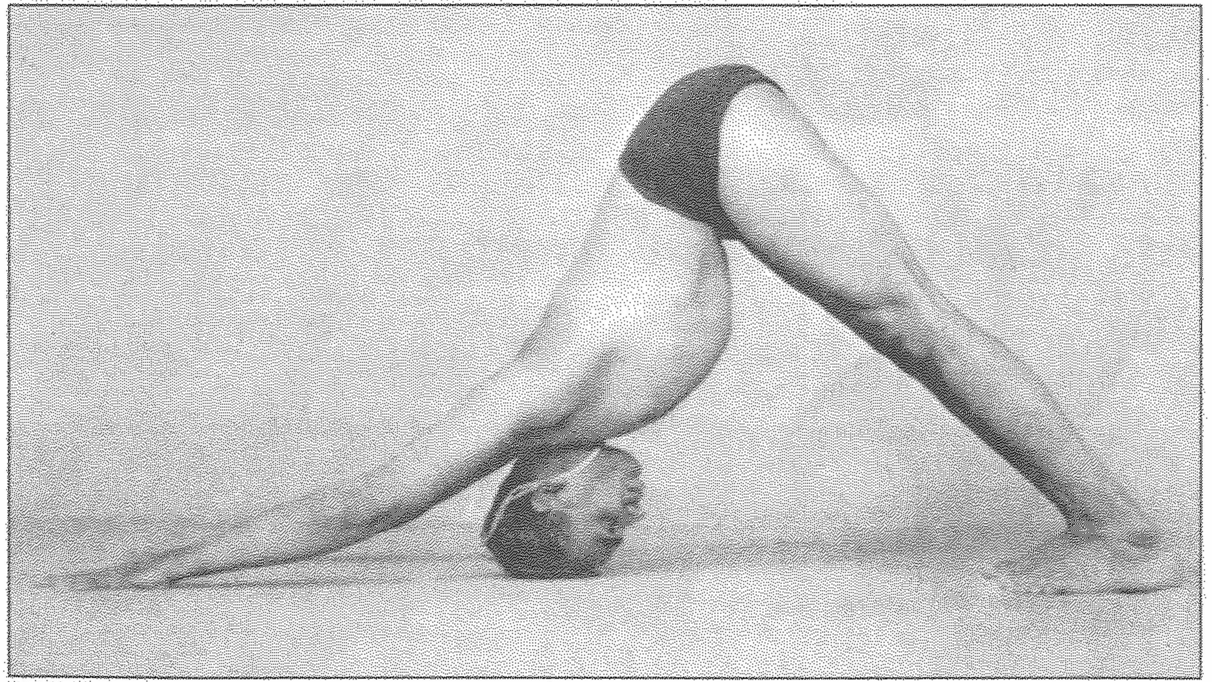






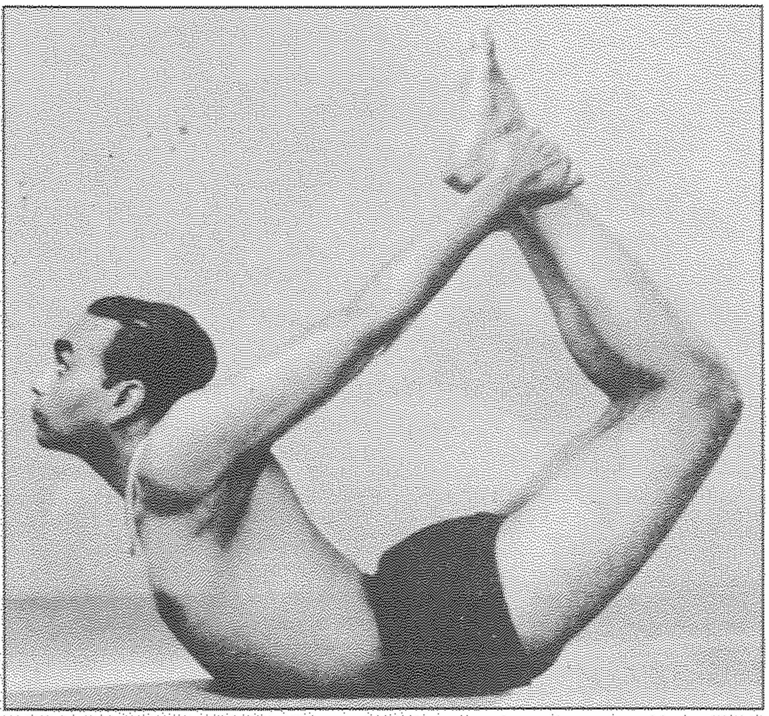
Look at the Feet

28, 29 Adho Mukha Śvānāsana



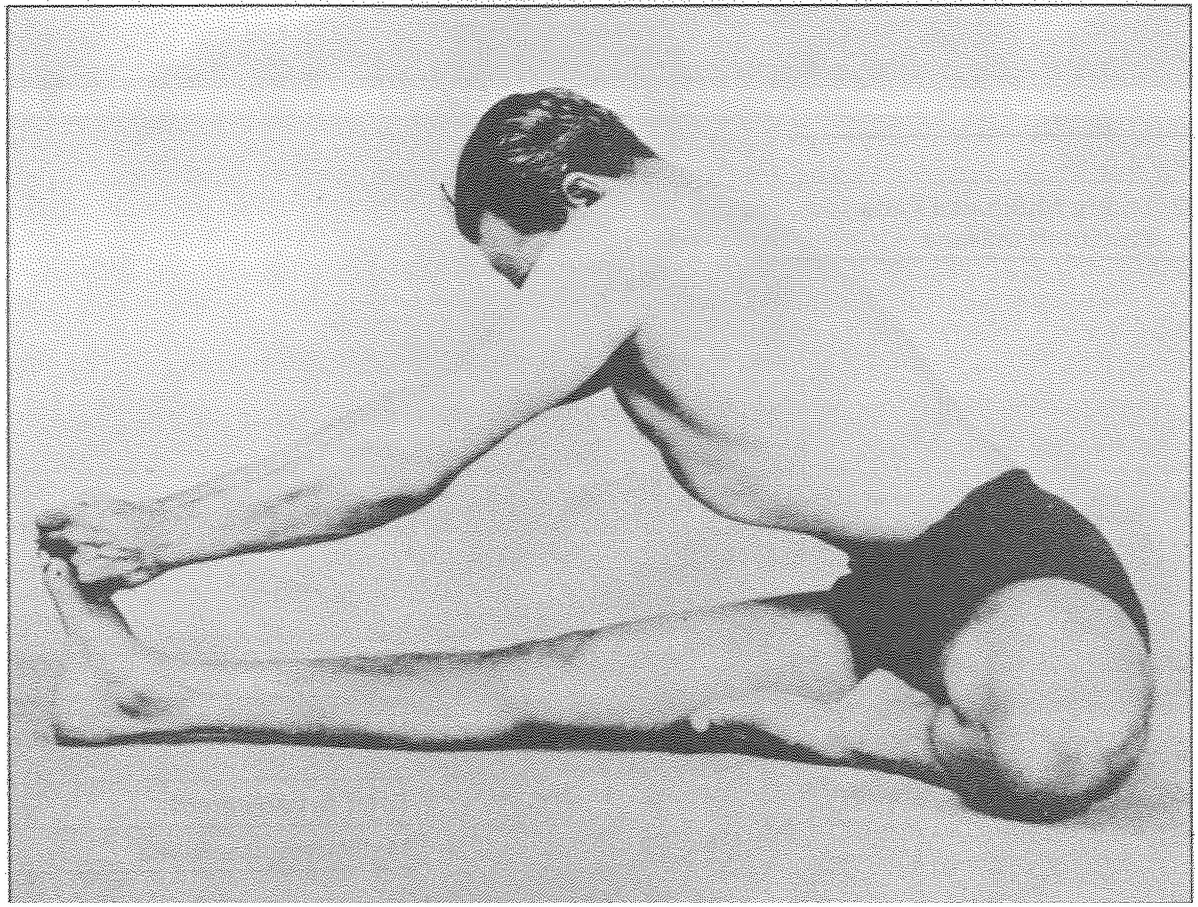
An August Bow

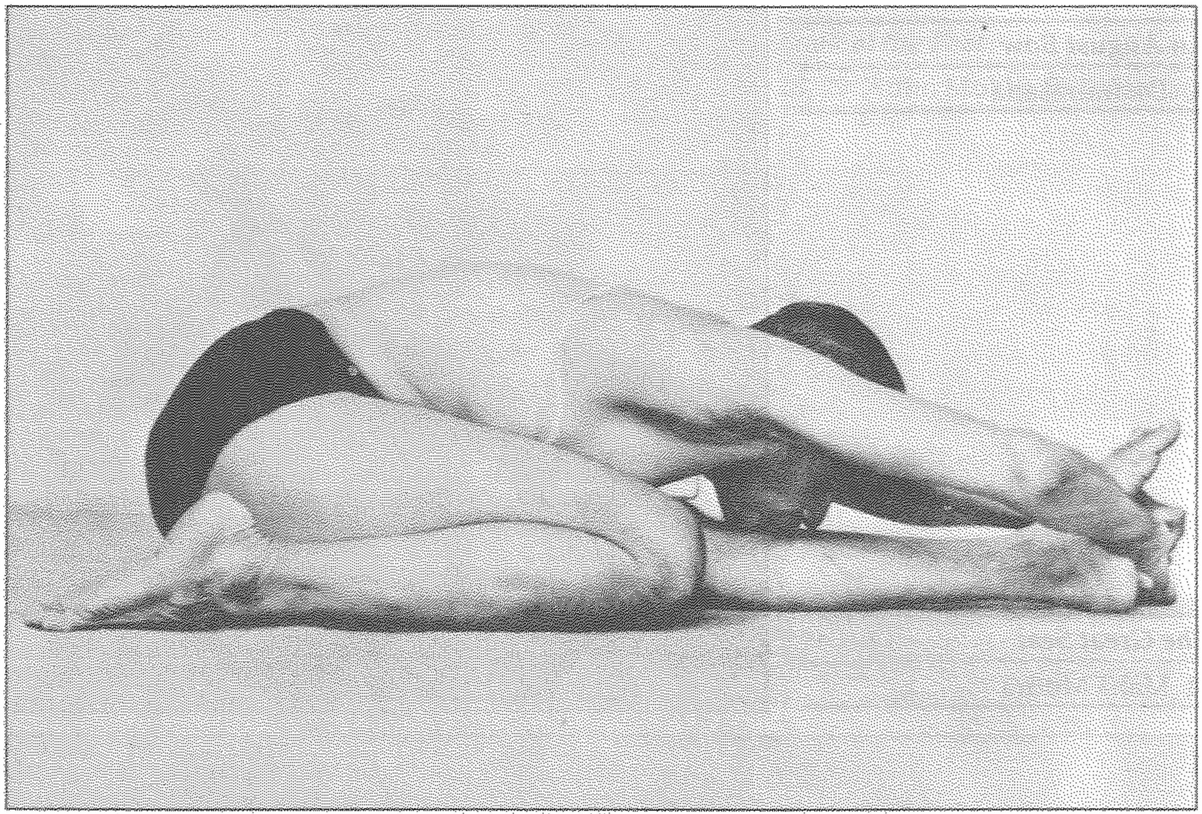
30 Dhanurāsana



The Great Seal

31 Mahā Mudrā





Just a Kiss

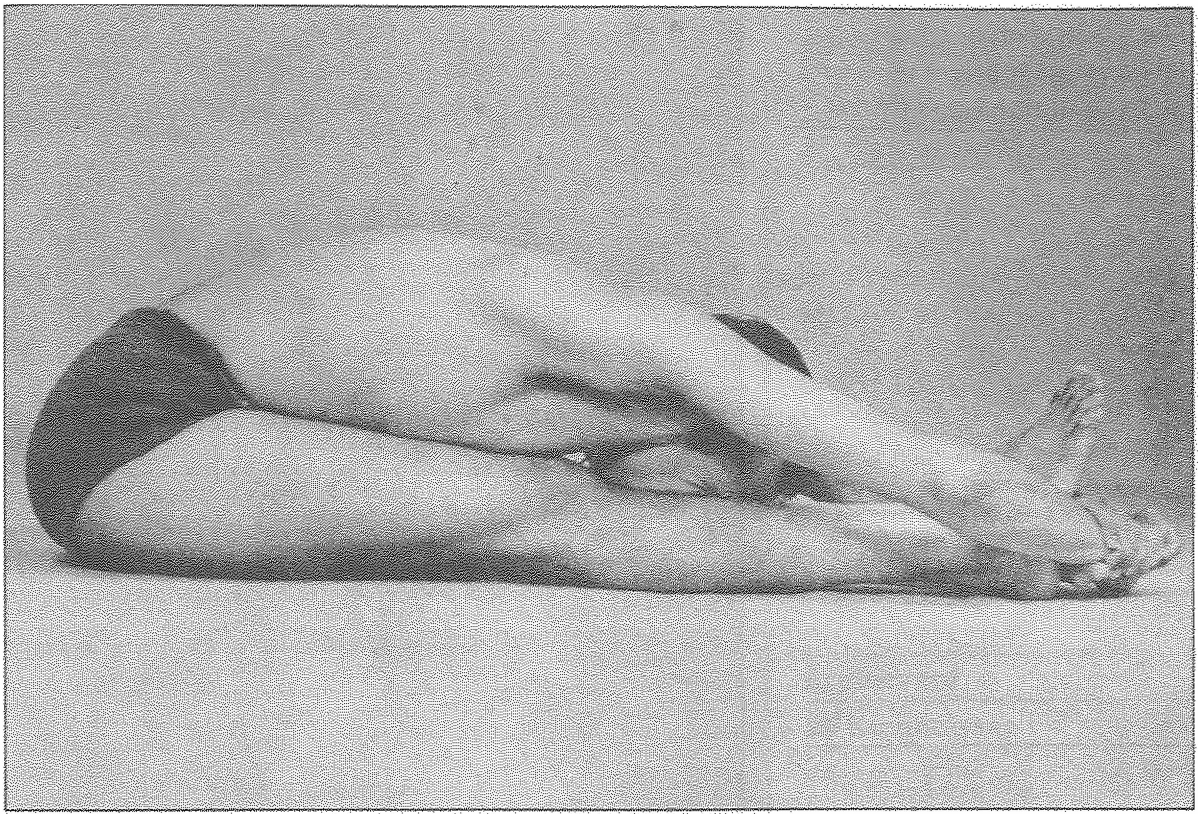
32 Triang Mukhaika Pada Paścimottānāsana

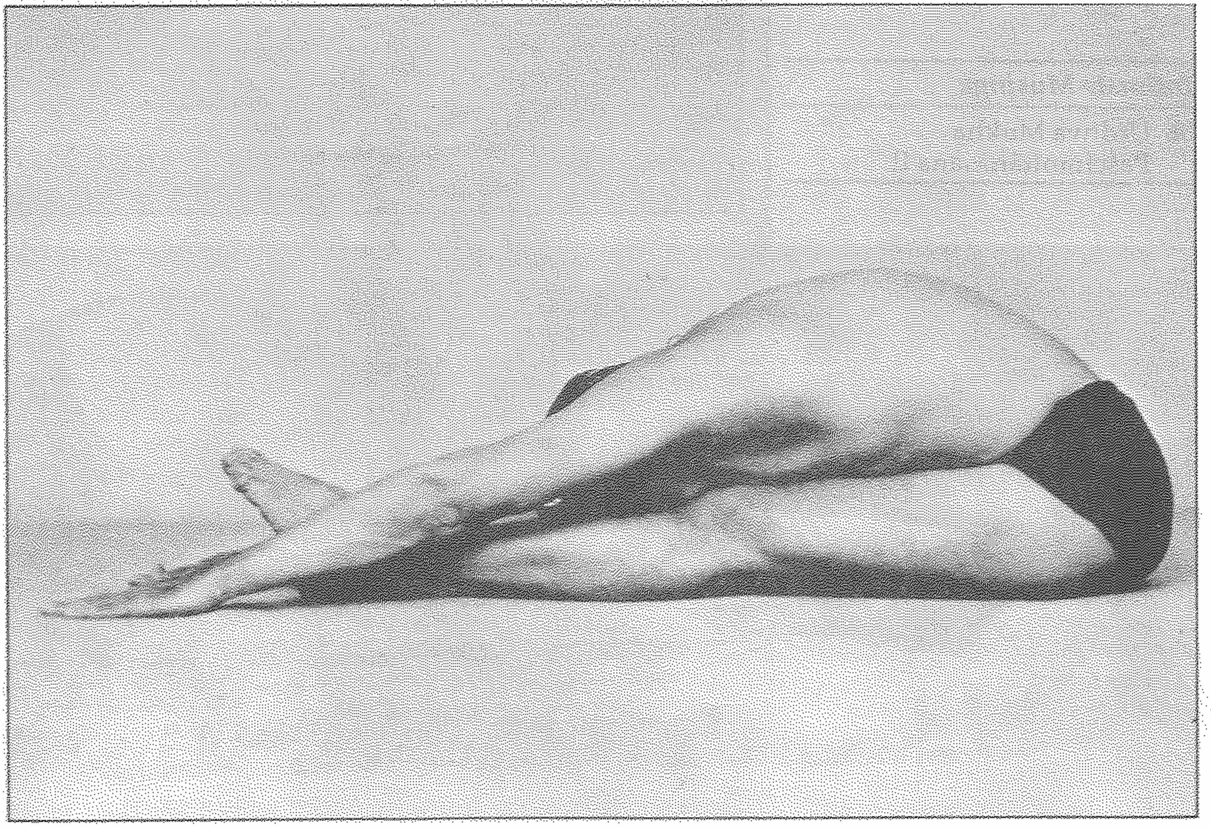
Cogitation

33 Paścimottānāsana

Total Involvement

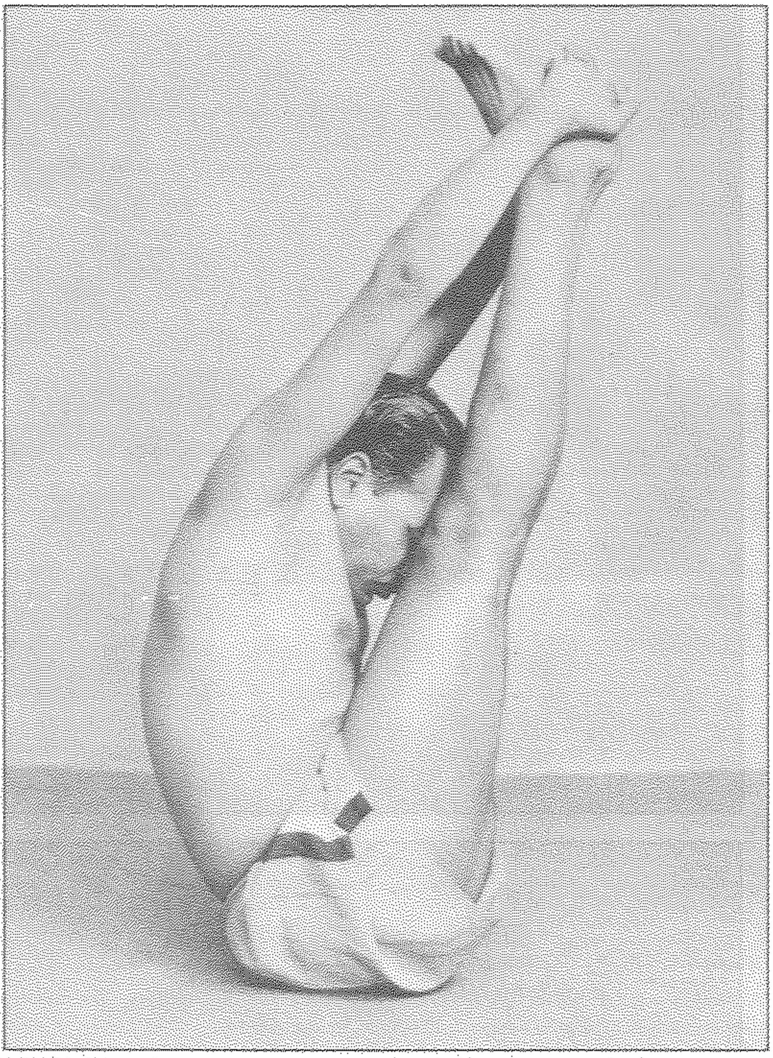
34 Paścimottānāsana





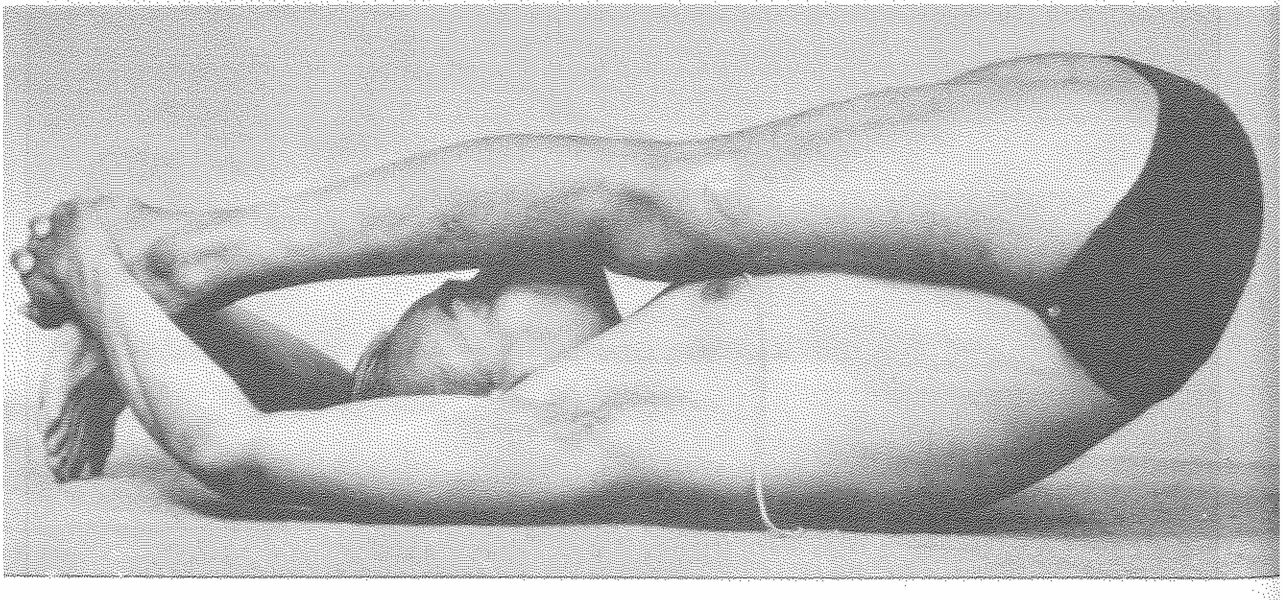
The Clamp Force

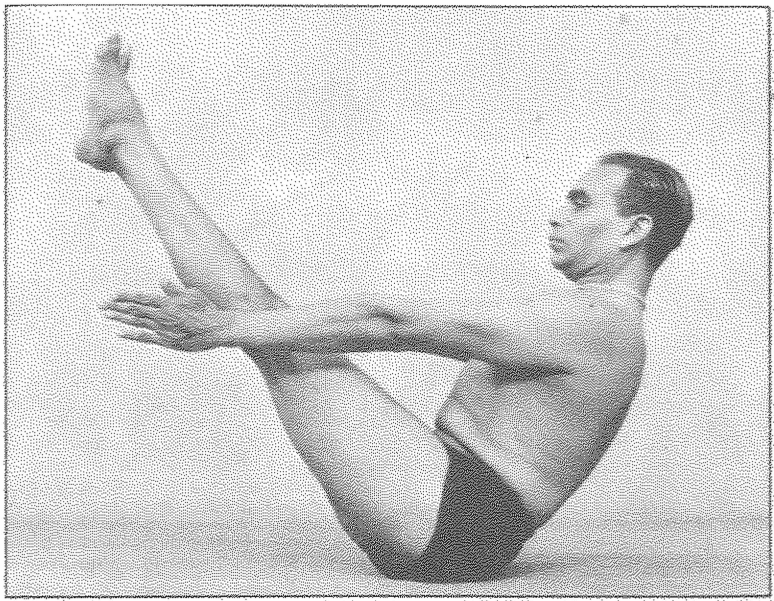
35 Ūrdhva Mukha Paśćimottānāsana I



Intimate Musings

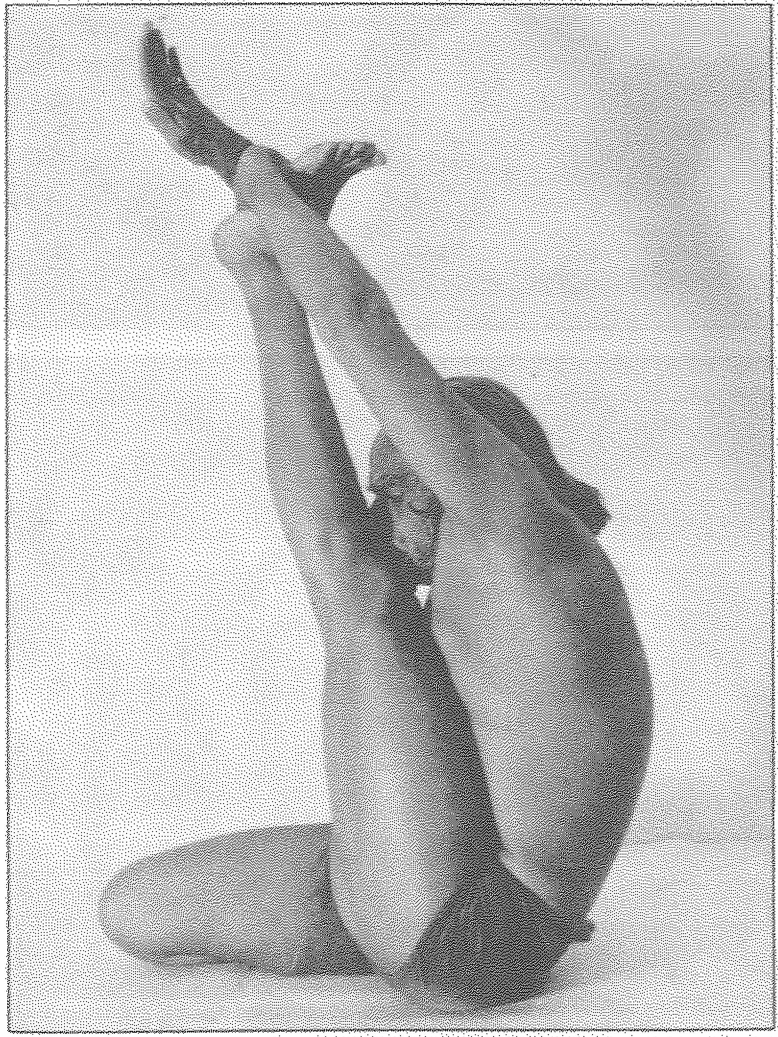
36 Ūrdhva Mukha Paśćimottānāsana II





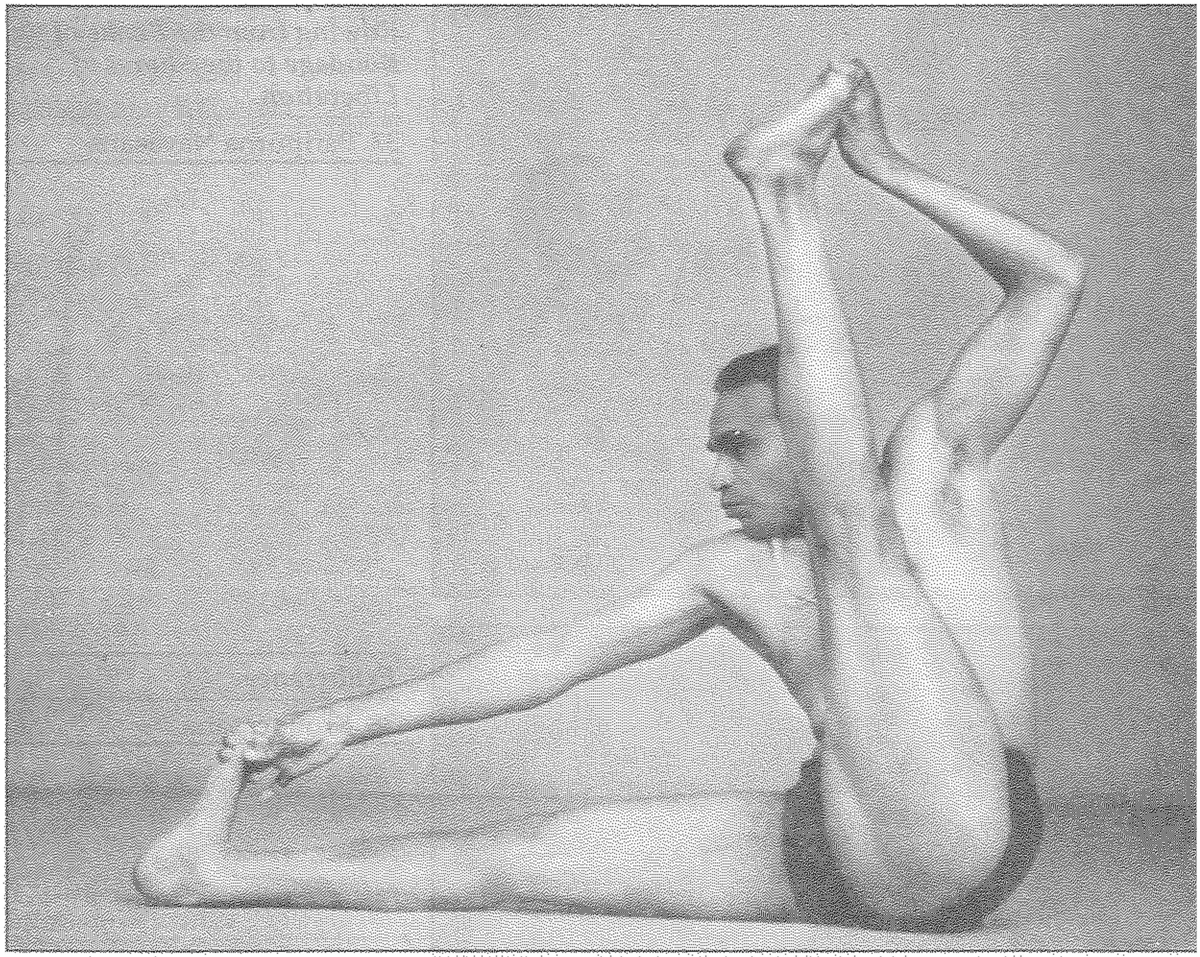
Rowing from the Banks of Bondage to the Shores of Liberation

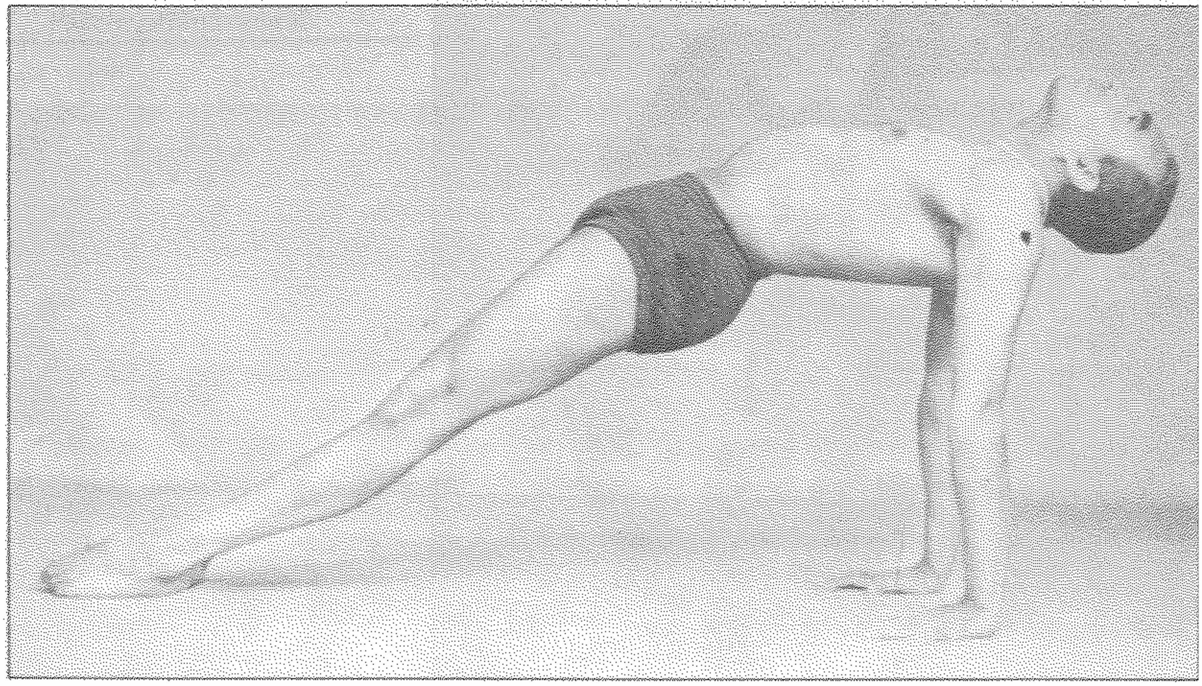
37 Paripūrṇa Nāvāsana



Exuberance

38 Krouncāsana





The Arrow Goes with a Twang

39 Ākarṇa Dhanurāsana

Homage to the Rising Sun

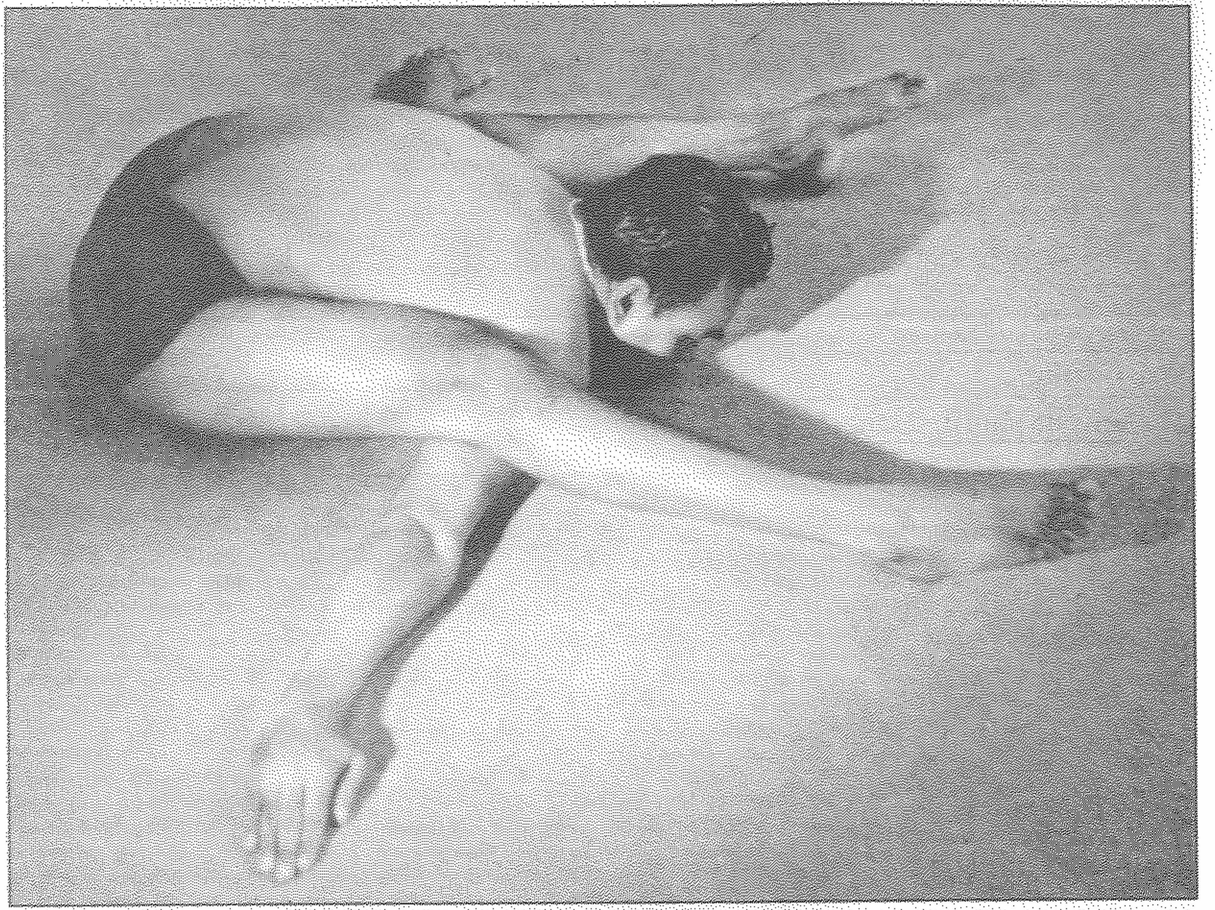
40 Pūrvottānāsana

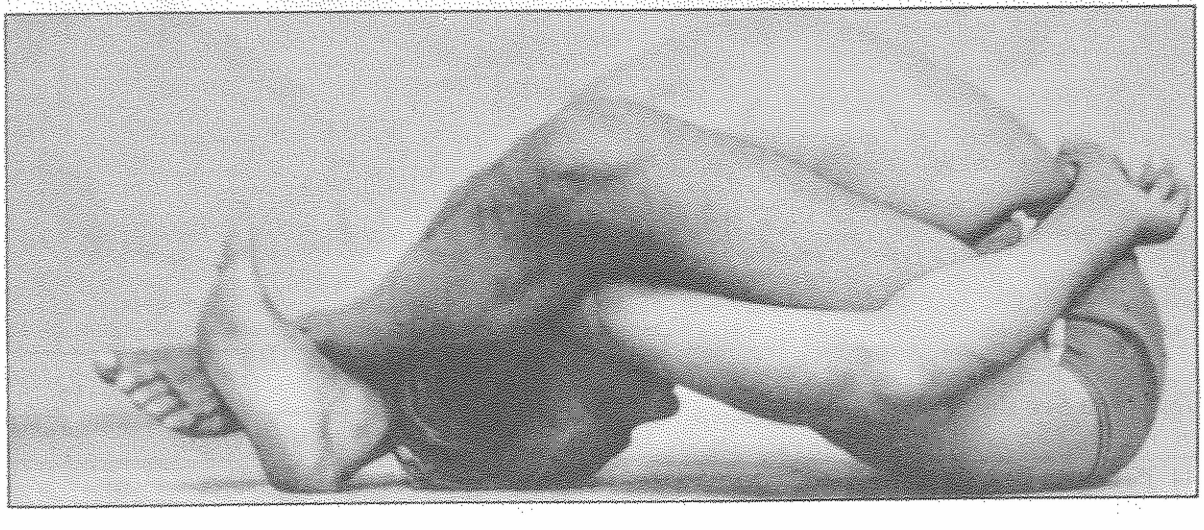
Embracing Mother Earth

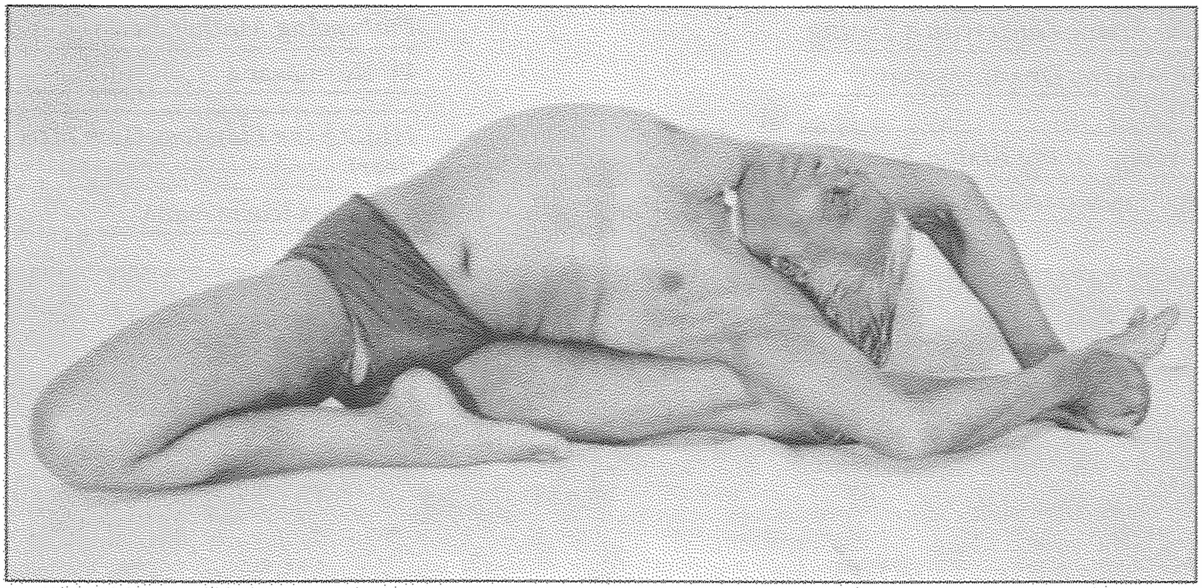
41 Kūrmāsana

Hiding the Flawless Gem (The Seer)

42 Supta Kūrmāsana

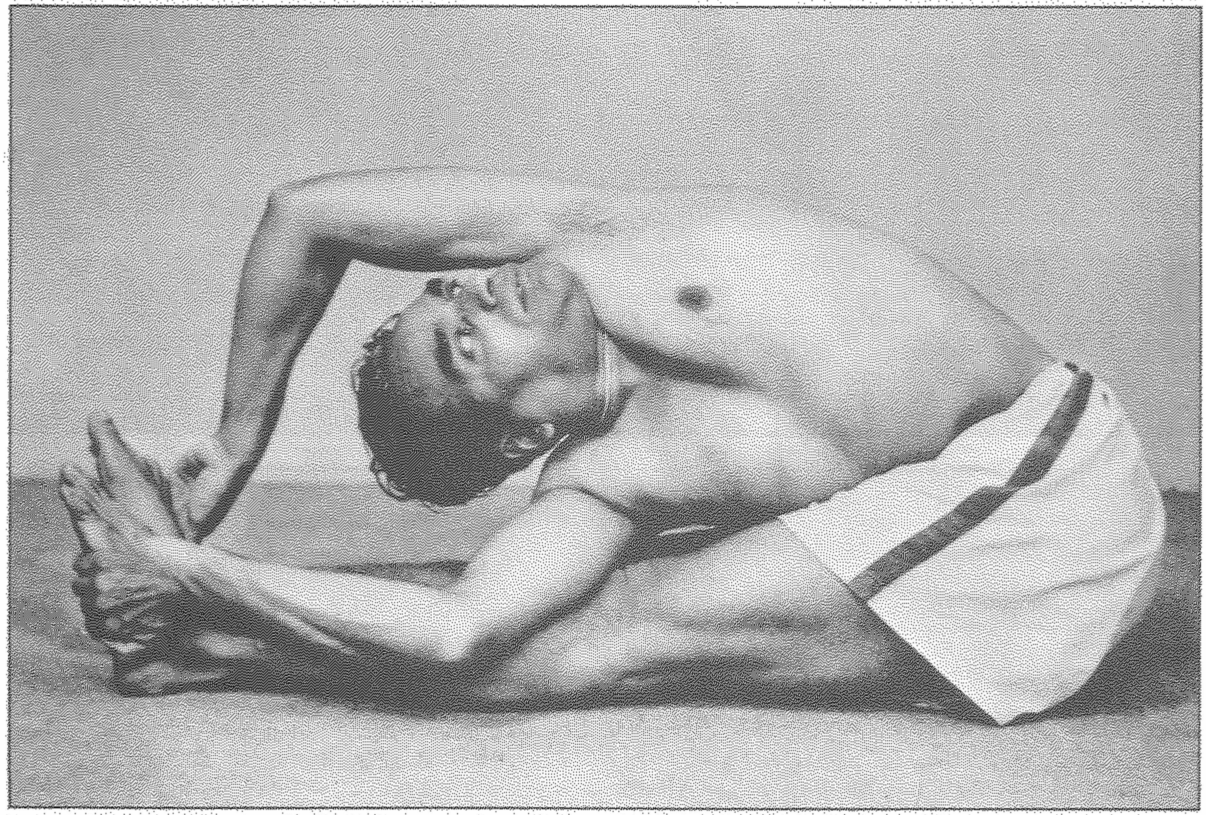






Star-Gazing

43 Parivṛtta Jānuśīrṣāsana

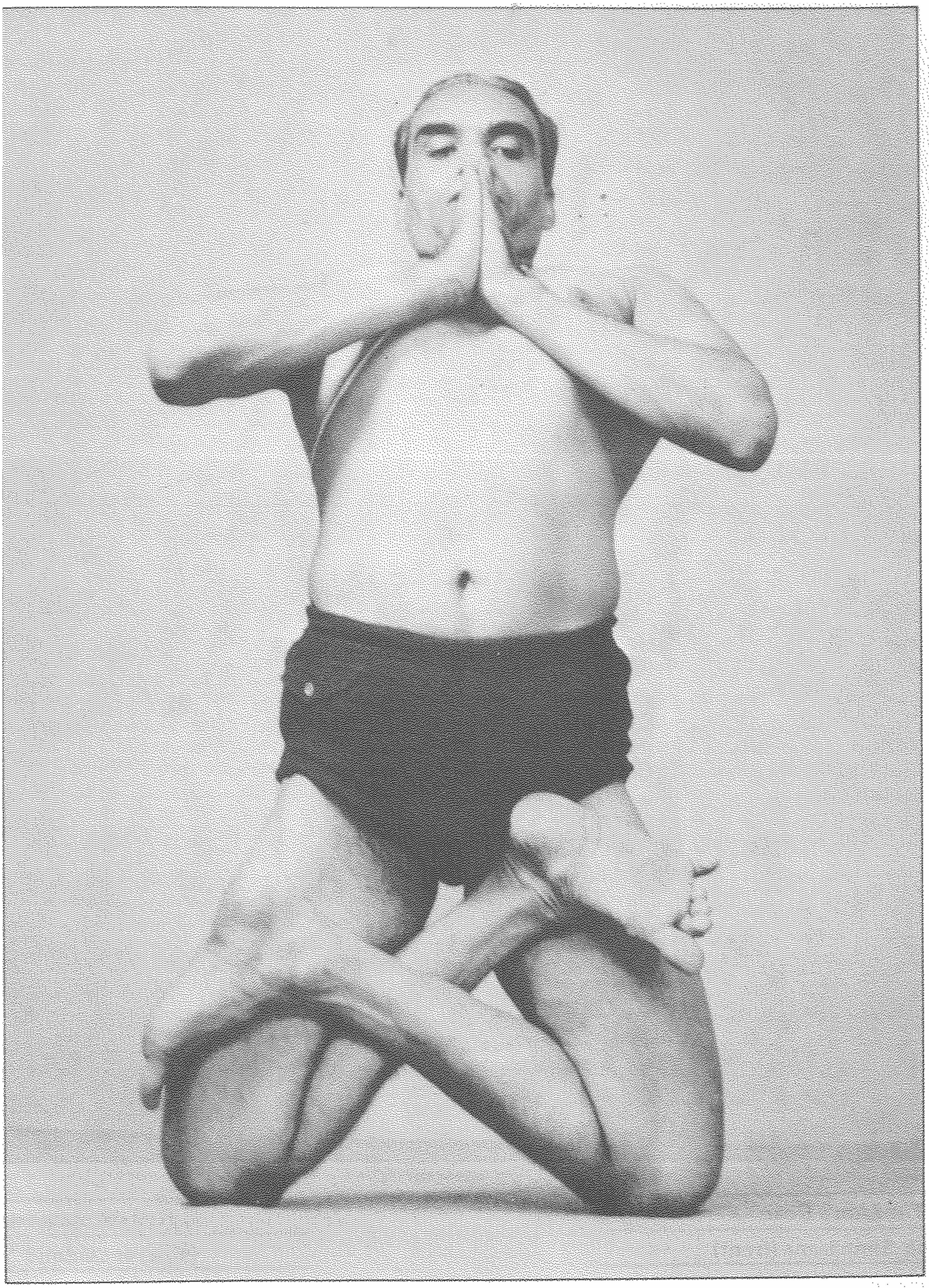


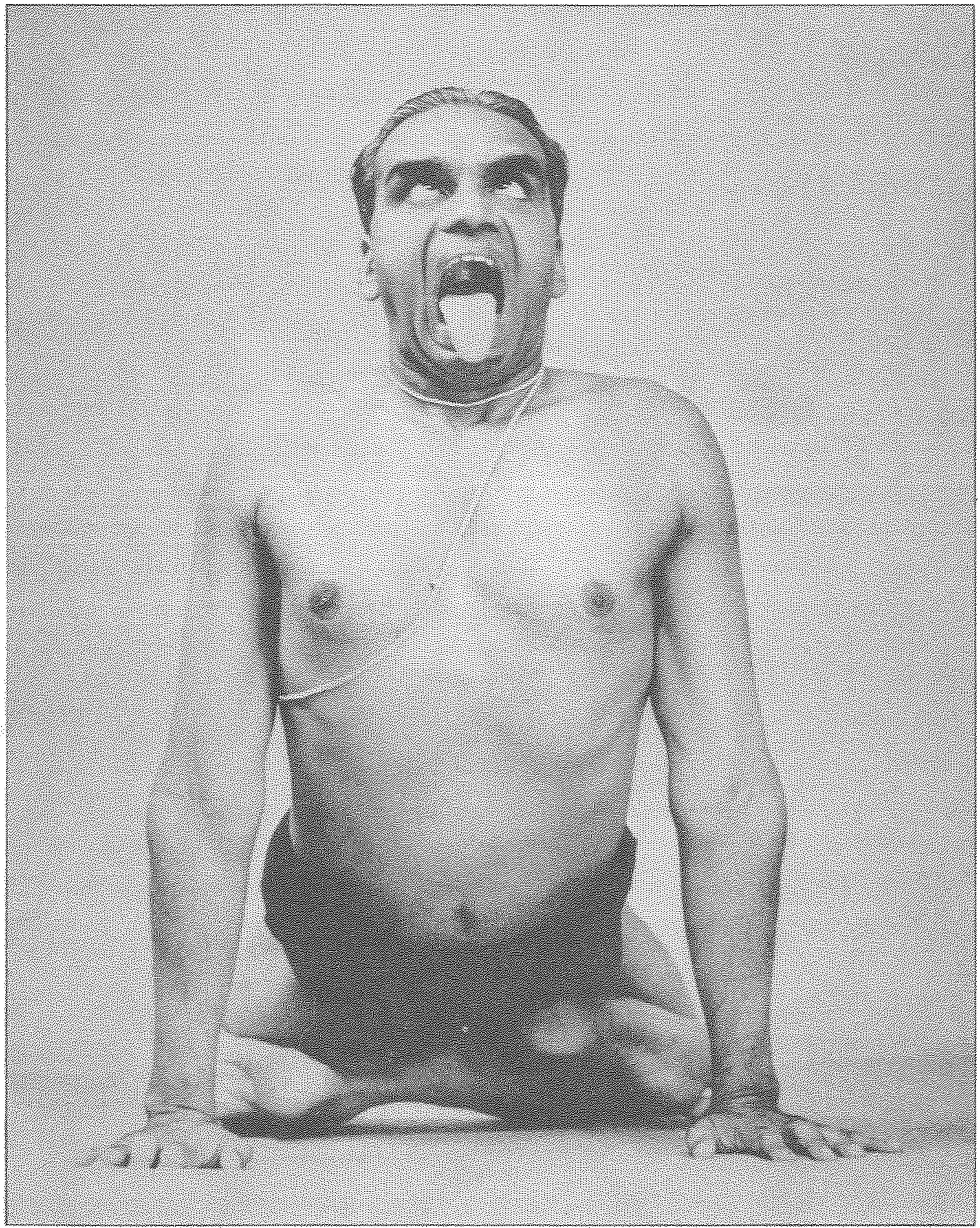
Trying to See the Other Point of View

44 Parivṛtta Paścimottānāsana

Tower of Strength

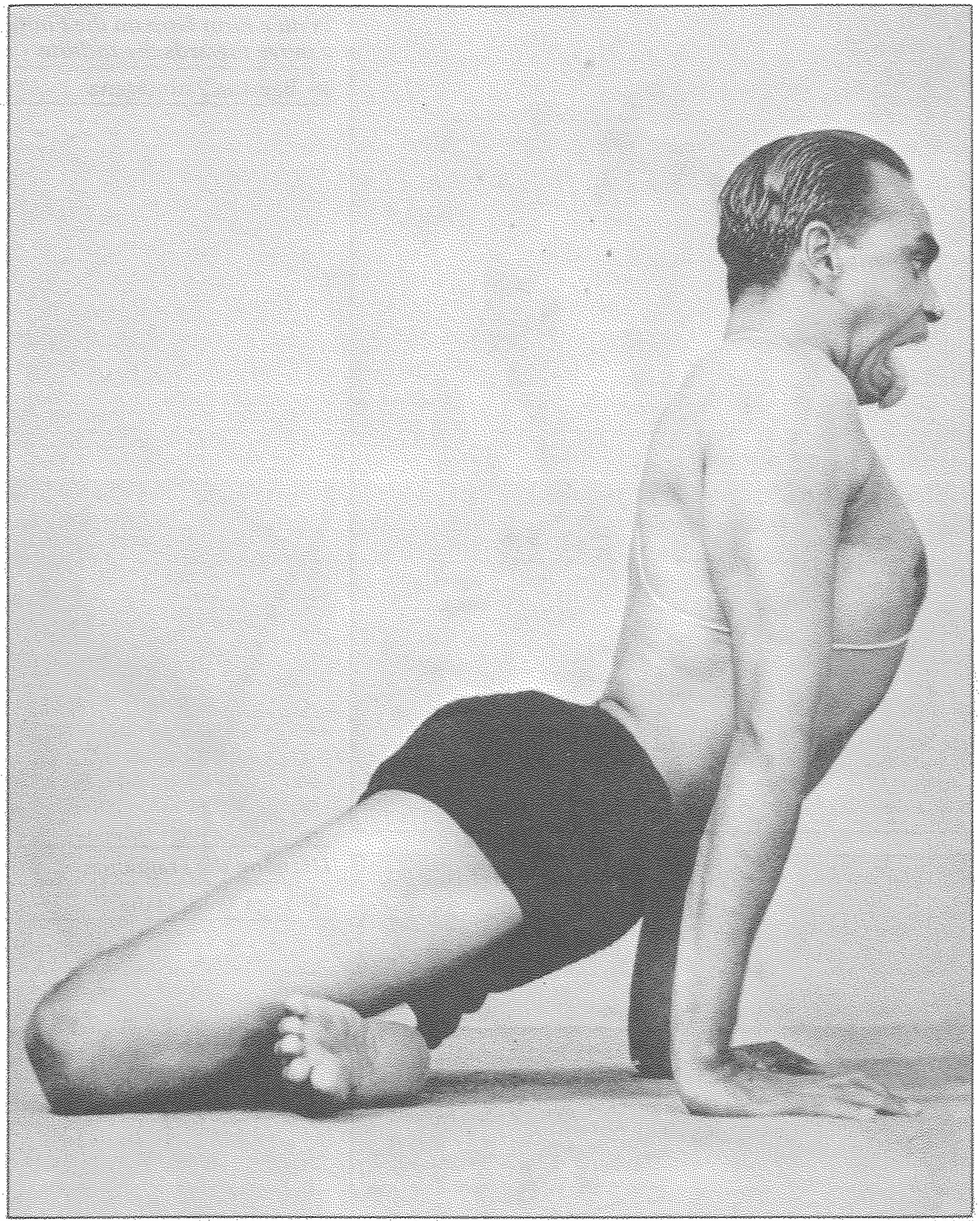
45 Gorakṣāsana





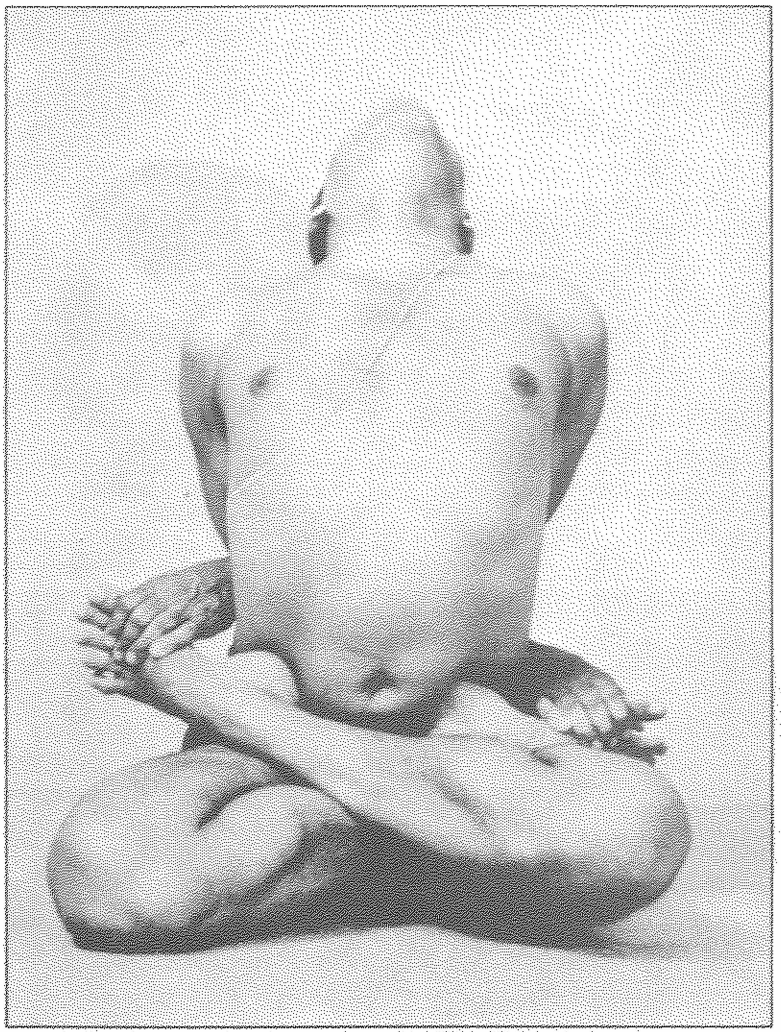
The Lion's Roar

46 Siṃhāsana (front)



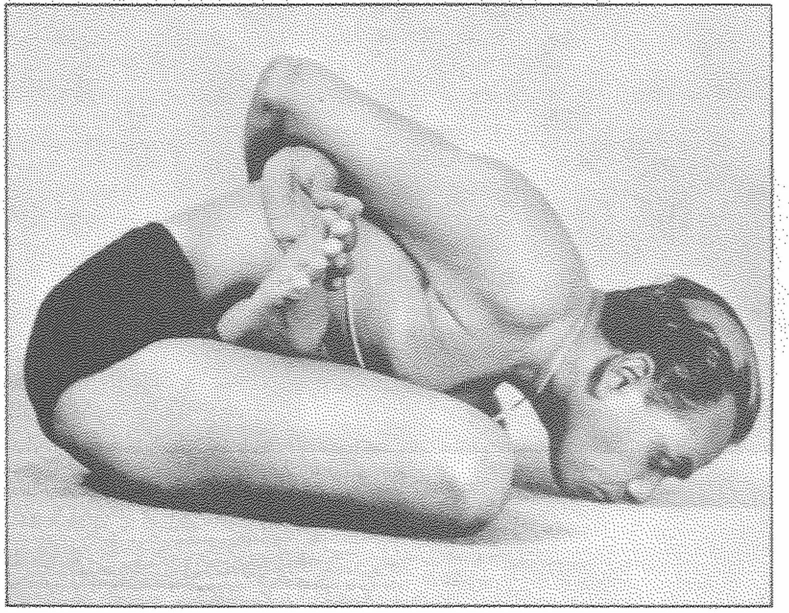
Awesome Majesty

47 Siṃhāsana (side)



With a Firm Grip on the Finite, a move towards the Infinite

48 Baddha Padmāsana

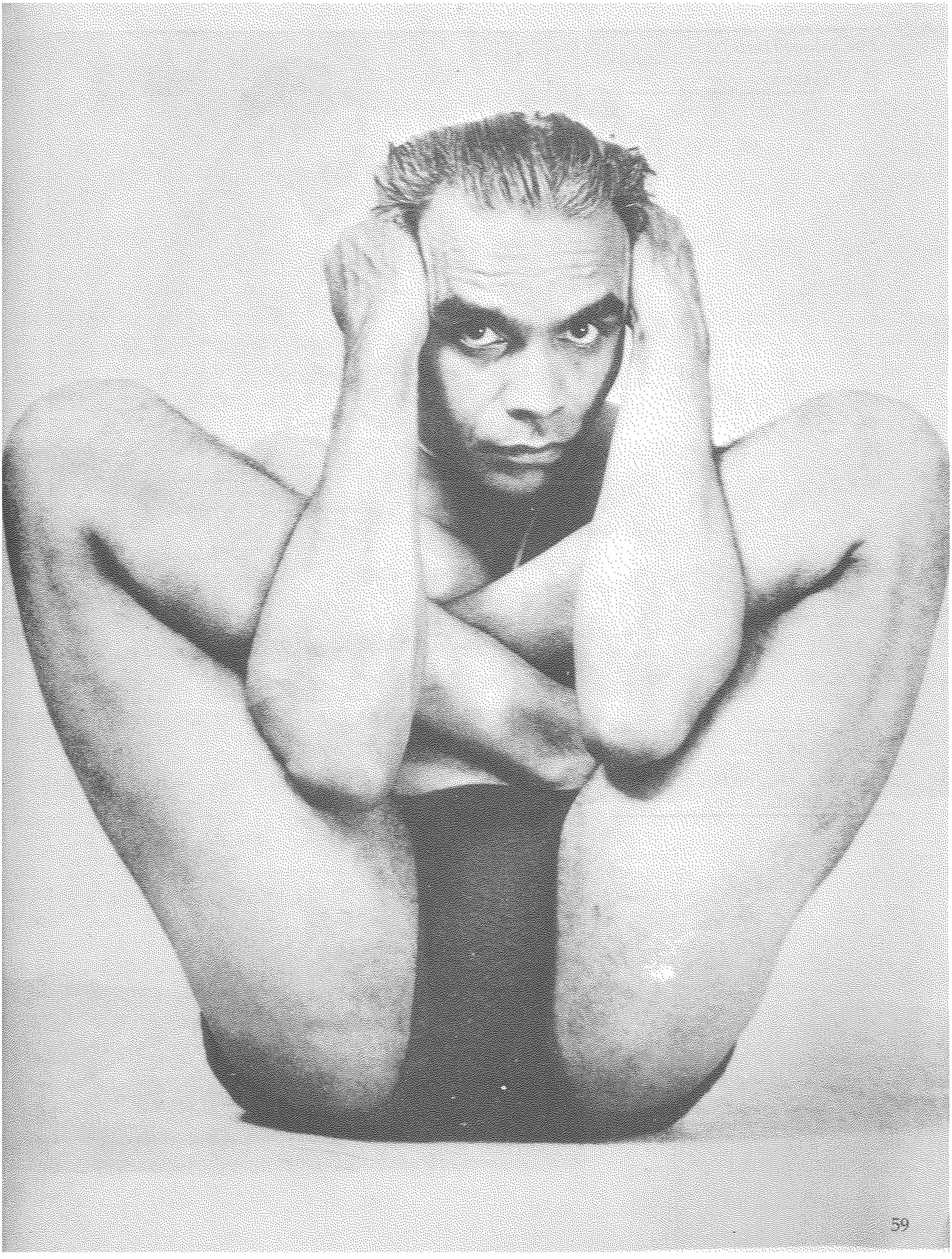


Drawing the Fragrance

49 Yoga Mudrāsana

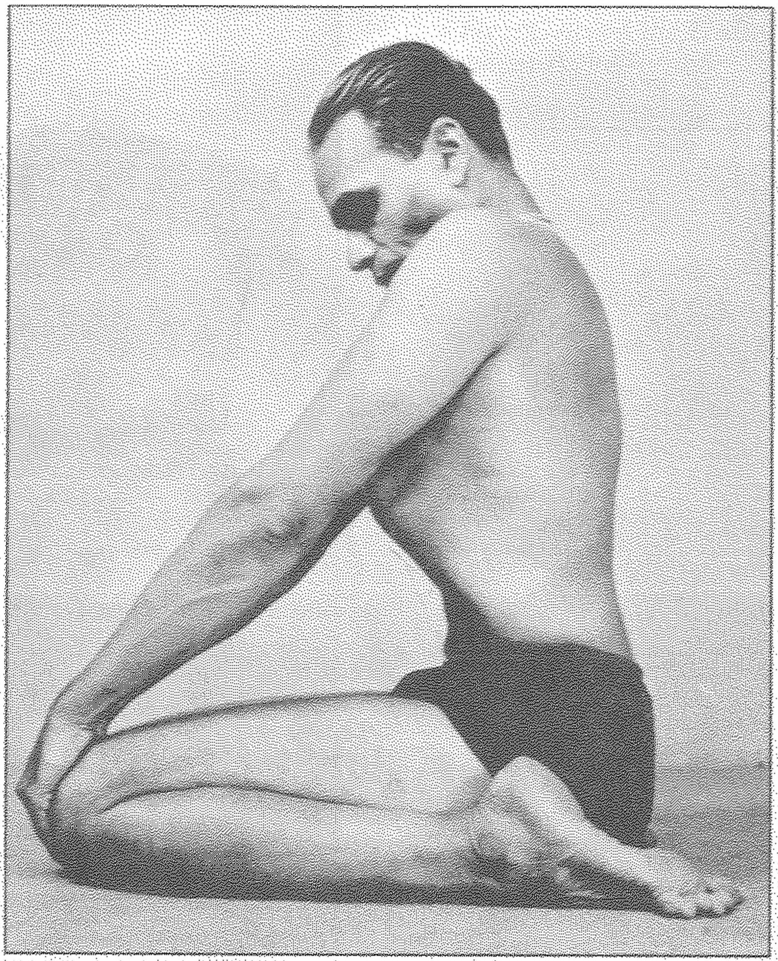
Please Excuse Me!

50 Garbha Piṇḍāsana



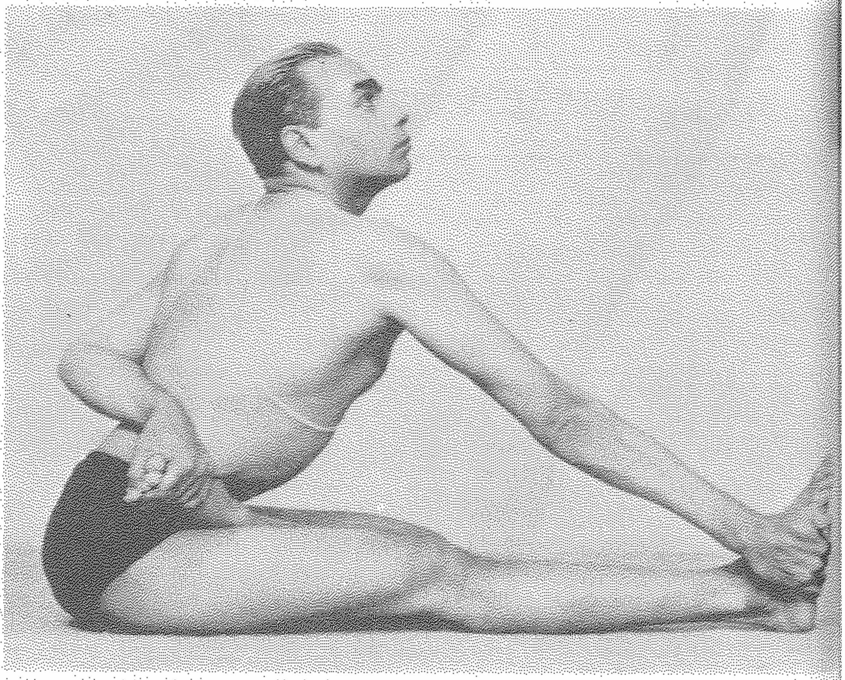
The Silent Hero

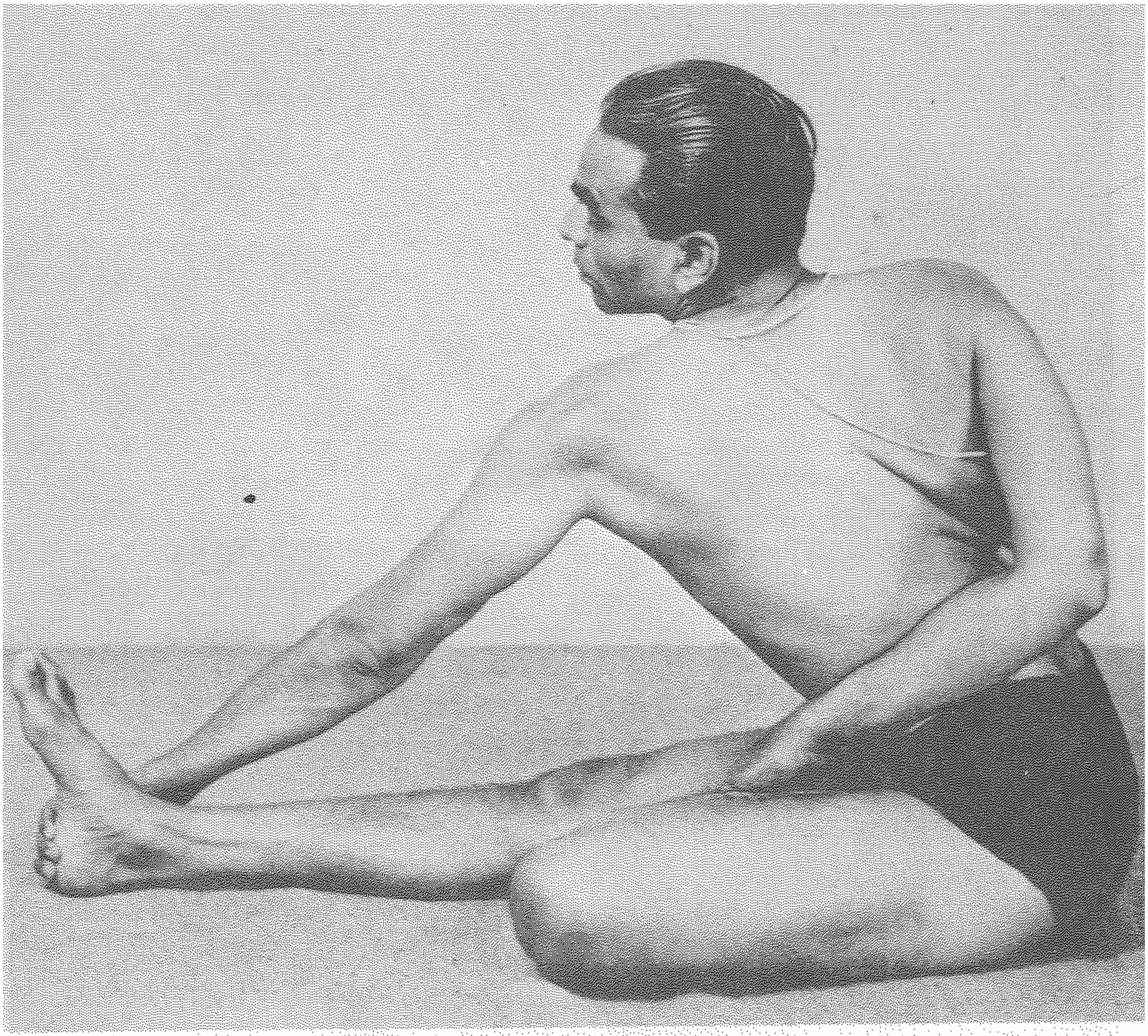
51 Virāsana



Hallo, How Is Your Foot?

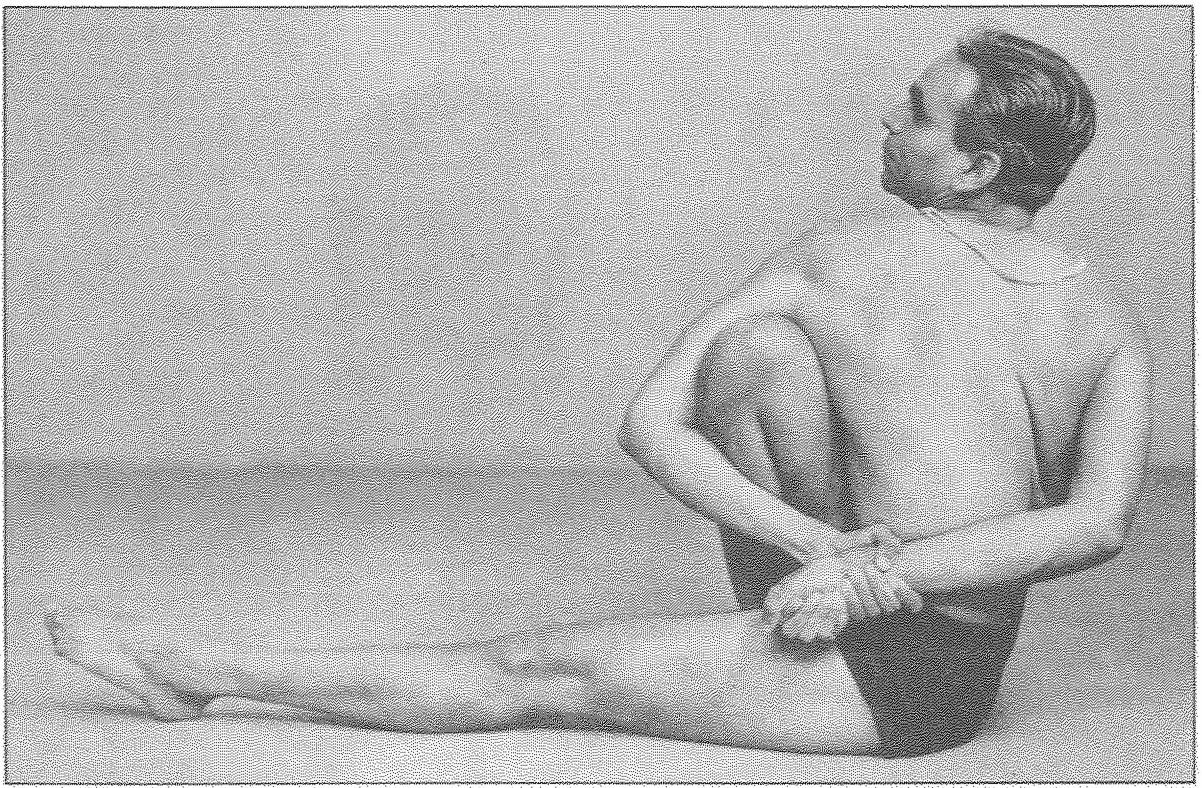
52 Ardha Baddha Padma
Paścimottānāsana

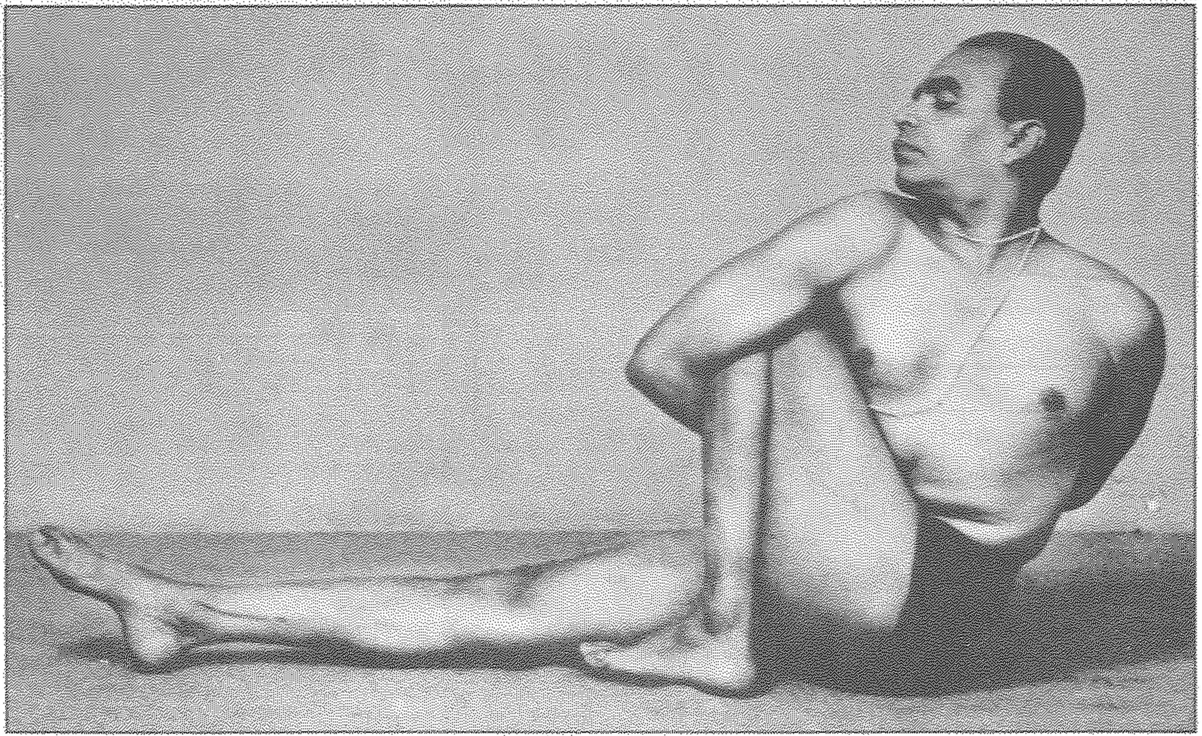




Look at Me

53 Ardha Matsyendrāsana I





Seems to Be in Safe Hands!

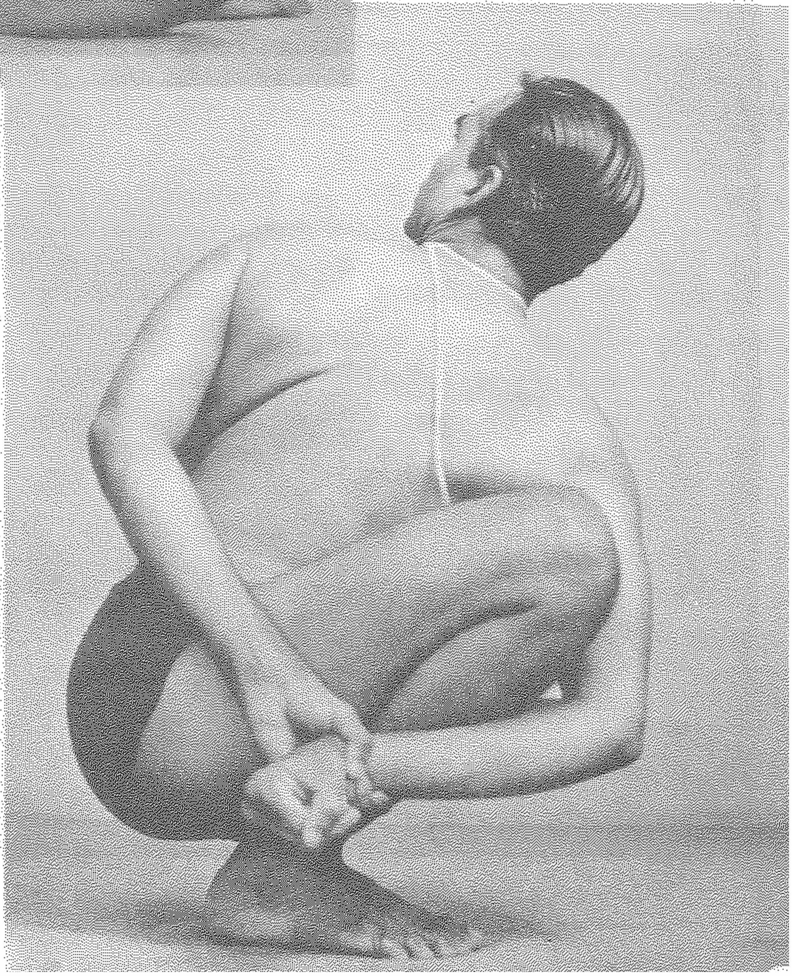
54, 55 Marīchyāsana

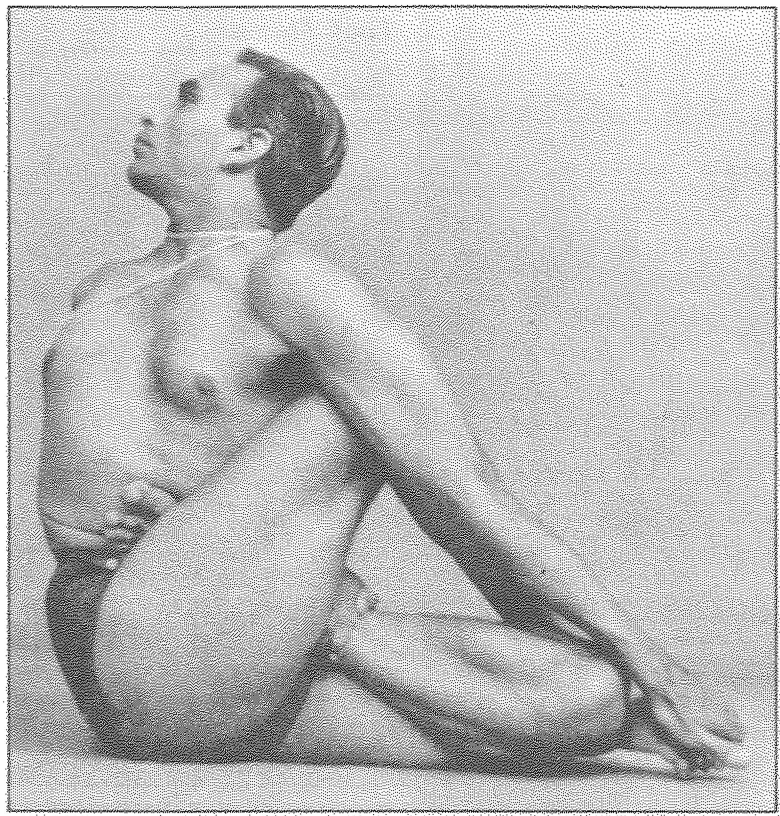
Look There!

56 Ardha Matsyendrāsana II

Good Companions

57 Pāśāsana



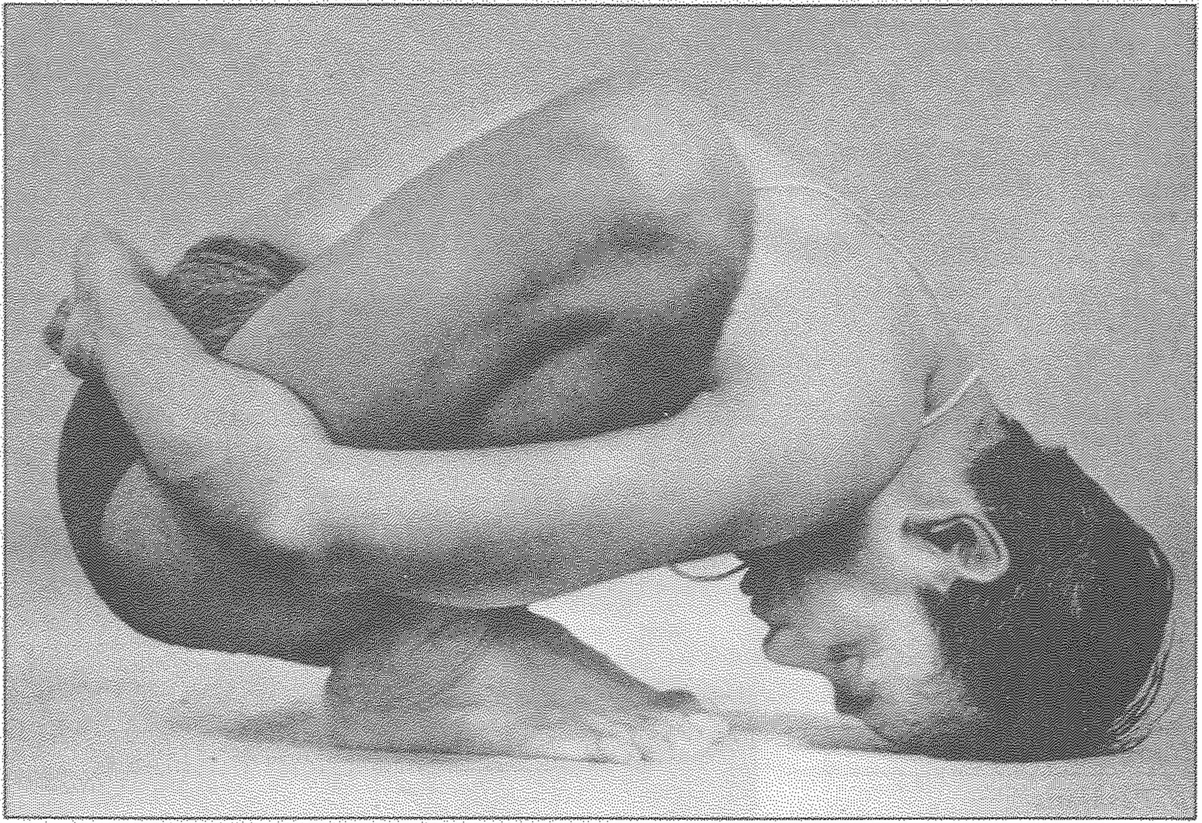


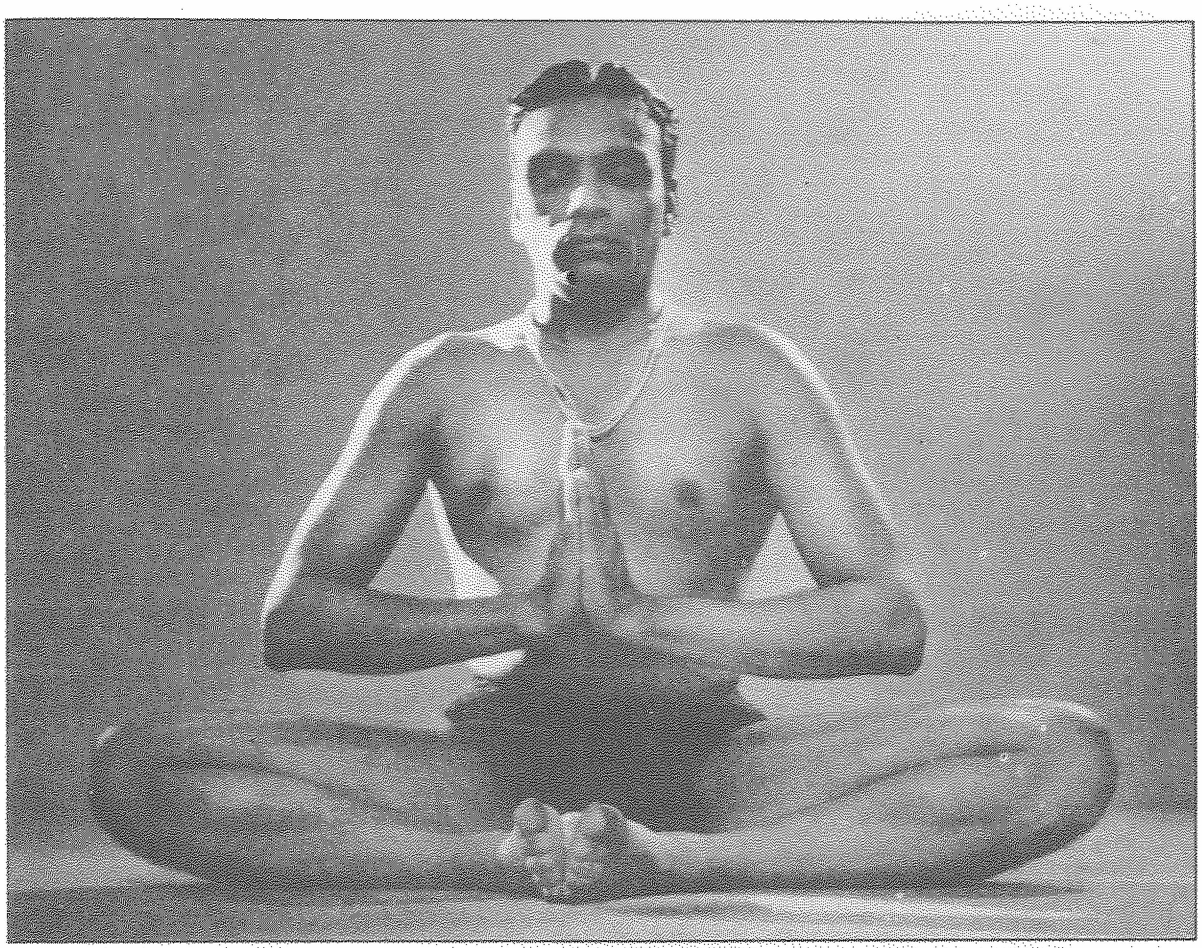
Serpentine Gyrations of the Mighty Fish

58 Paripūrṇa Matsyendrāsana

Learn to Respect thy Feet

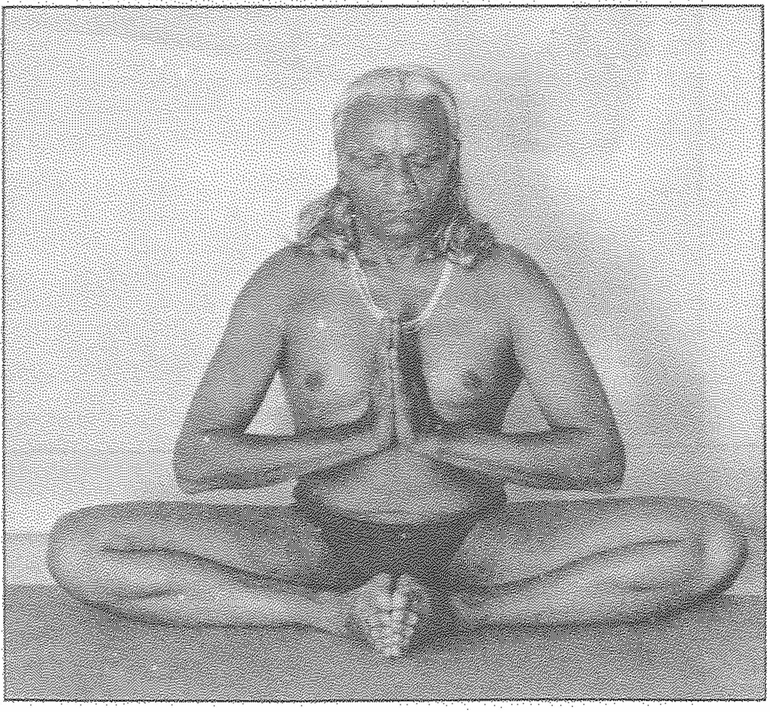
59 Mālāsana

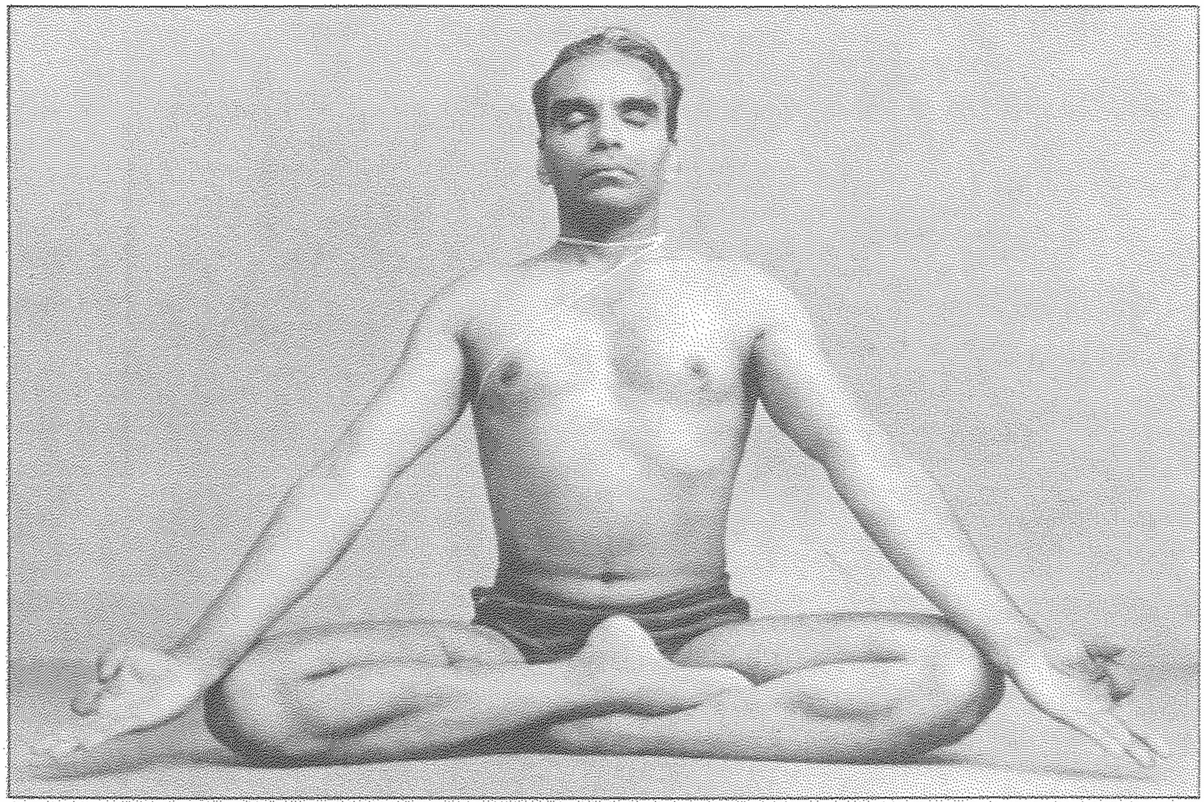


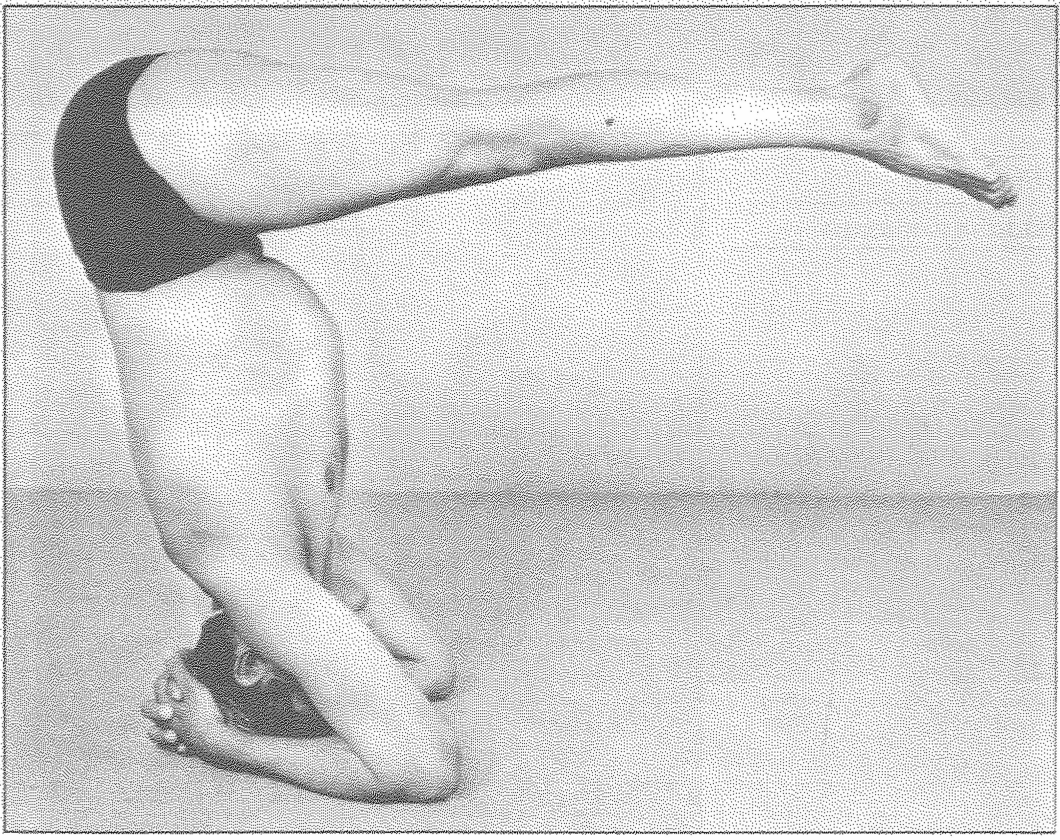


Enchanting Dawn

60, 61 Baddha Koṇāsana





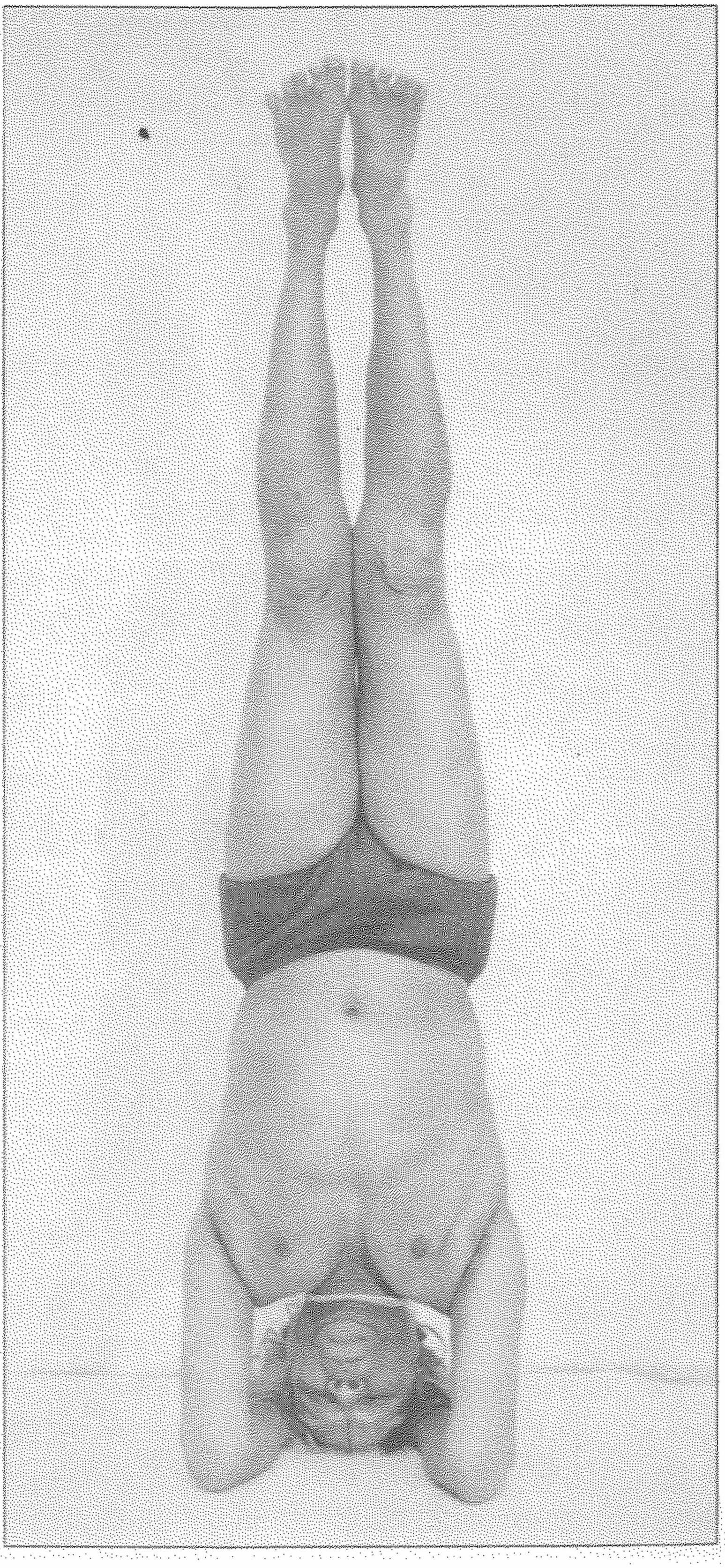


Pristine Purity

62 Siddhāsana

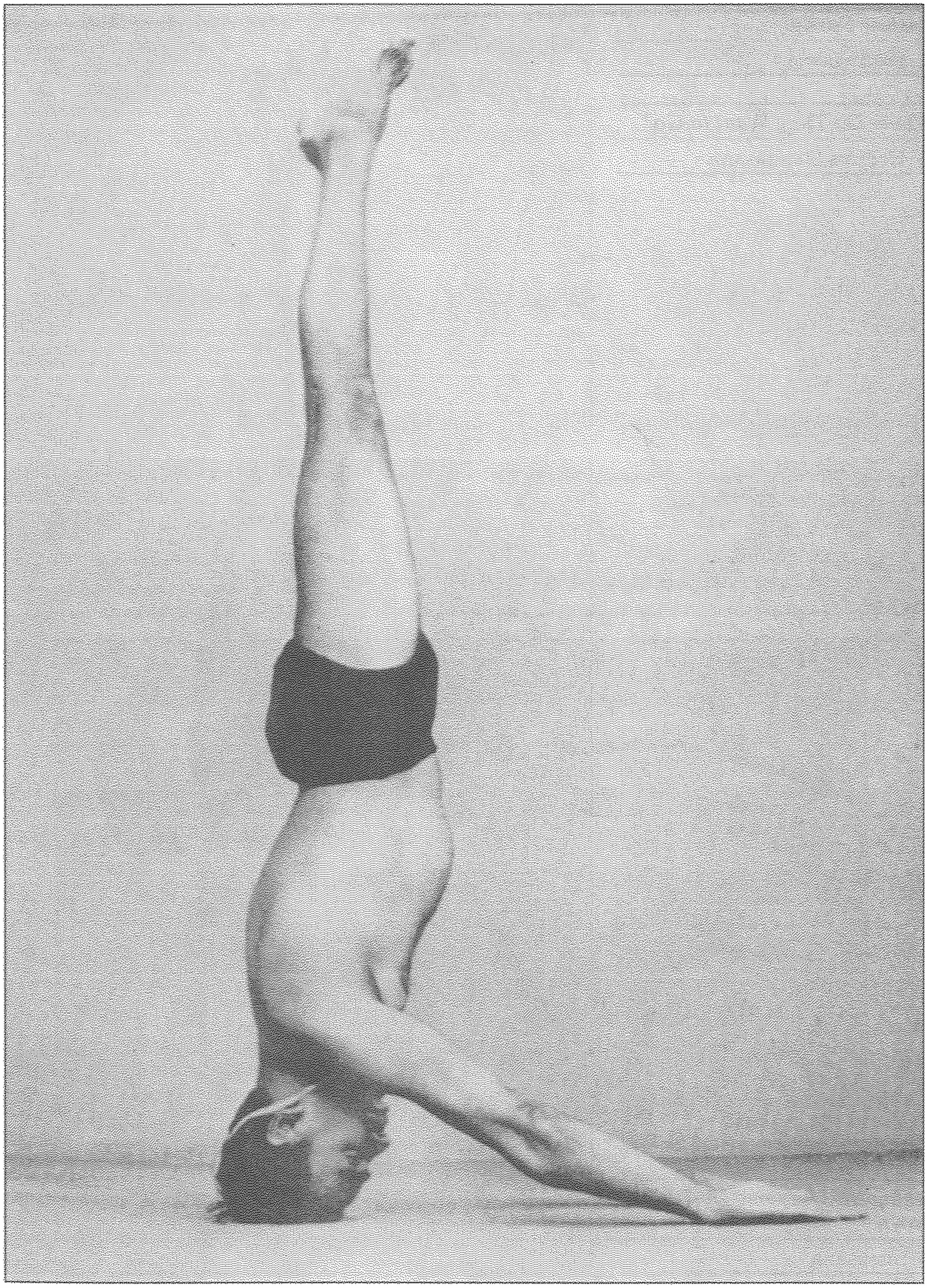
Where Do They Want to Go?

63 Ūrdhva Daṇḍāsana



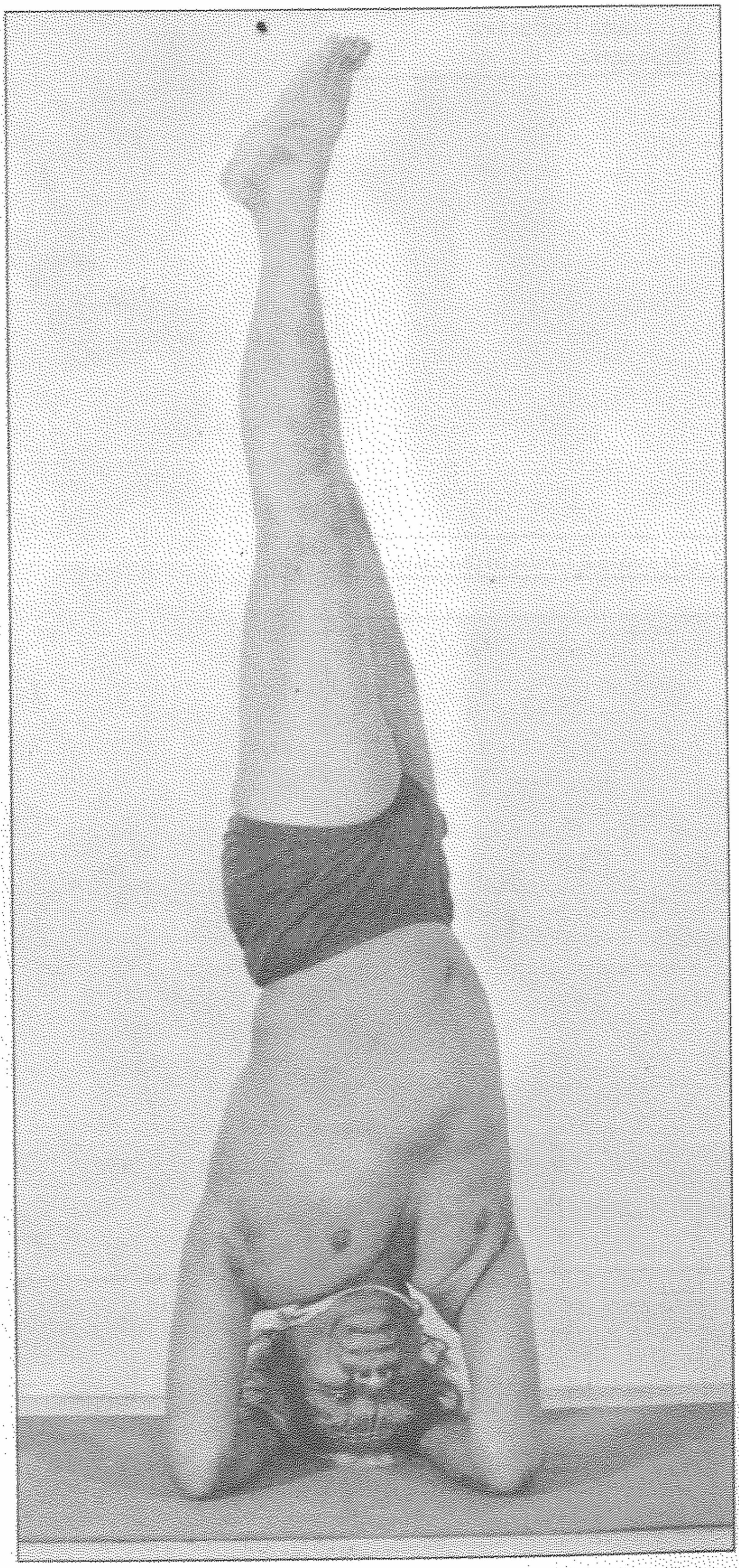
Seeing the Universe Upside Down

64 Śīrṣāsana



Tranquillising Freedom

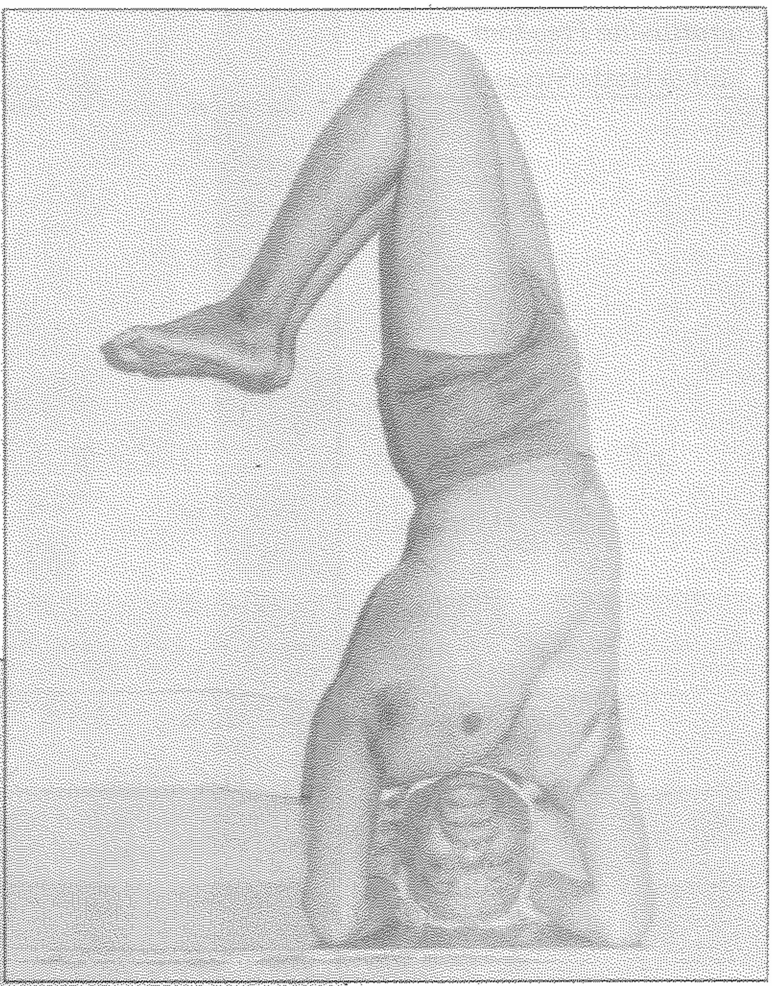
65 Mukta Hasta Śīrṣāsana



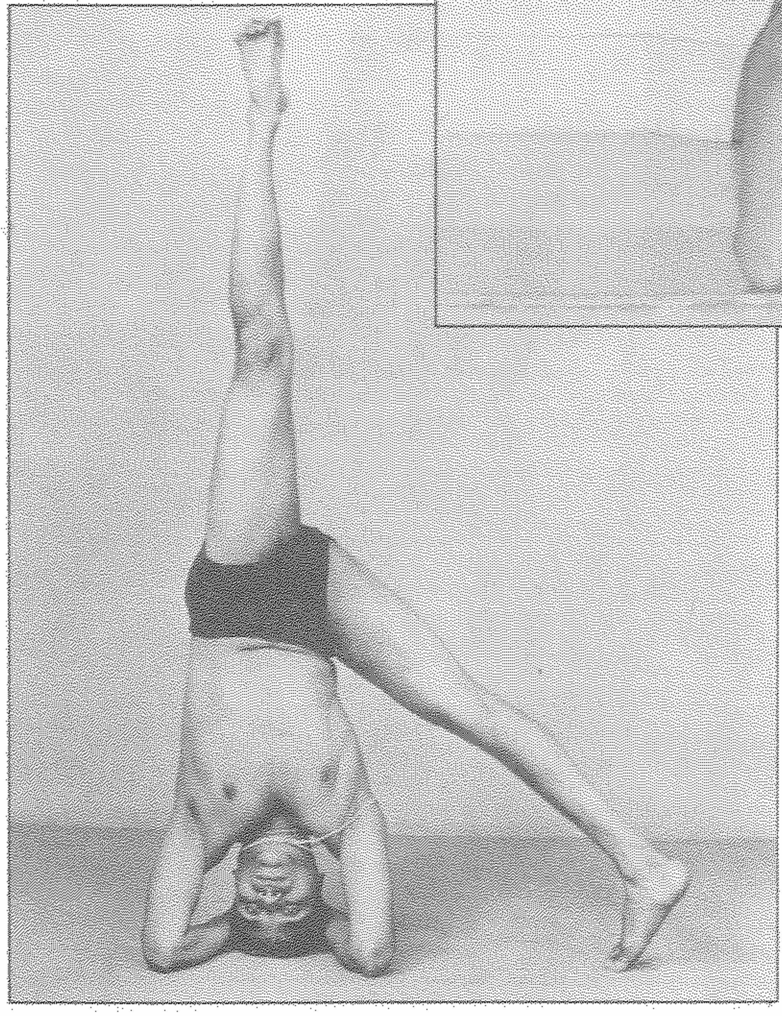
Melodious Tunes from the Upside-Down World

66 Pārśva Śīrṣāsana

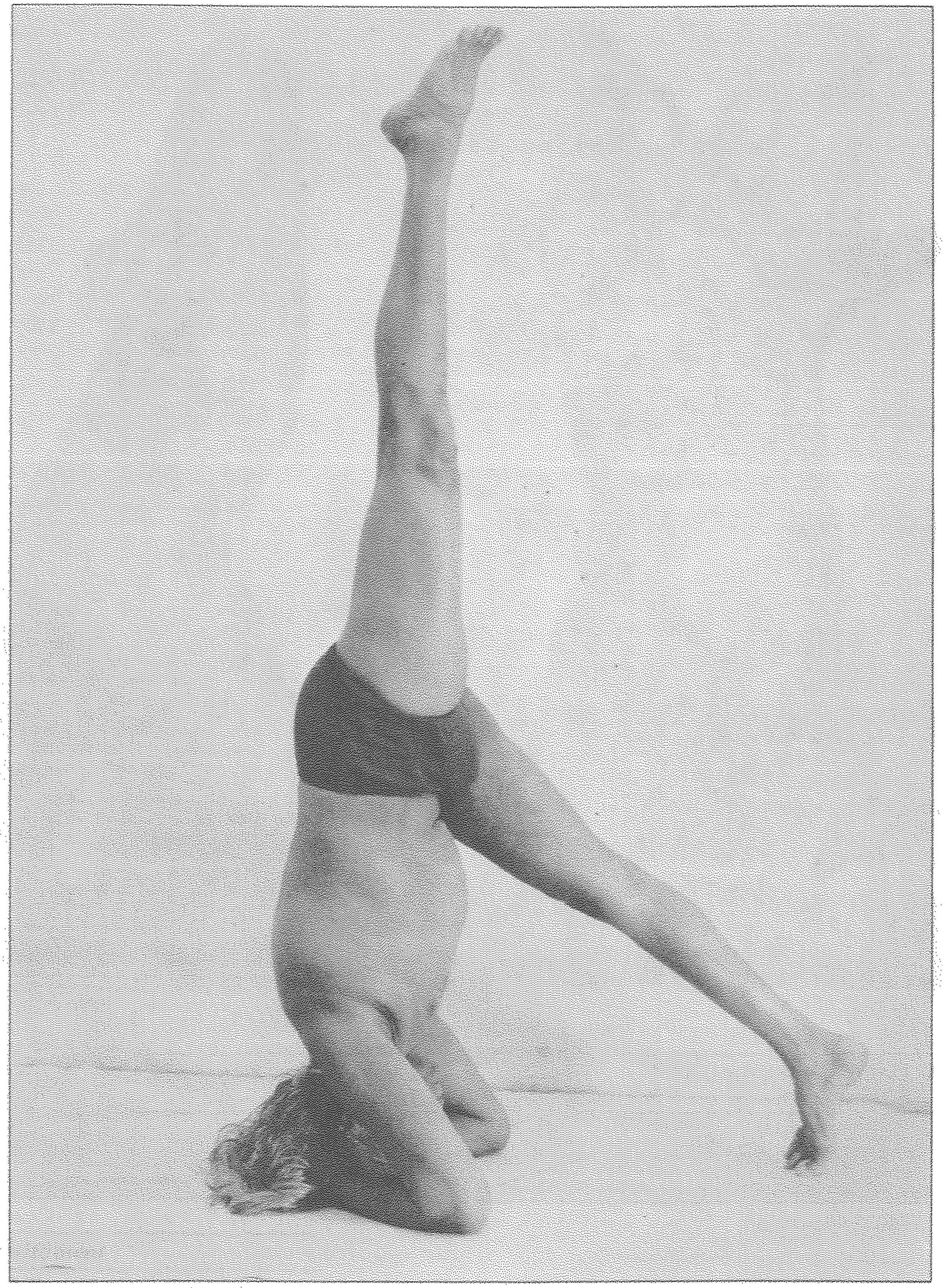
67 Vīrāsana in Pārśva Śīrṣāsana

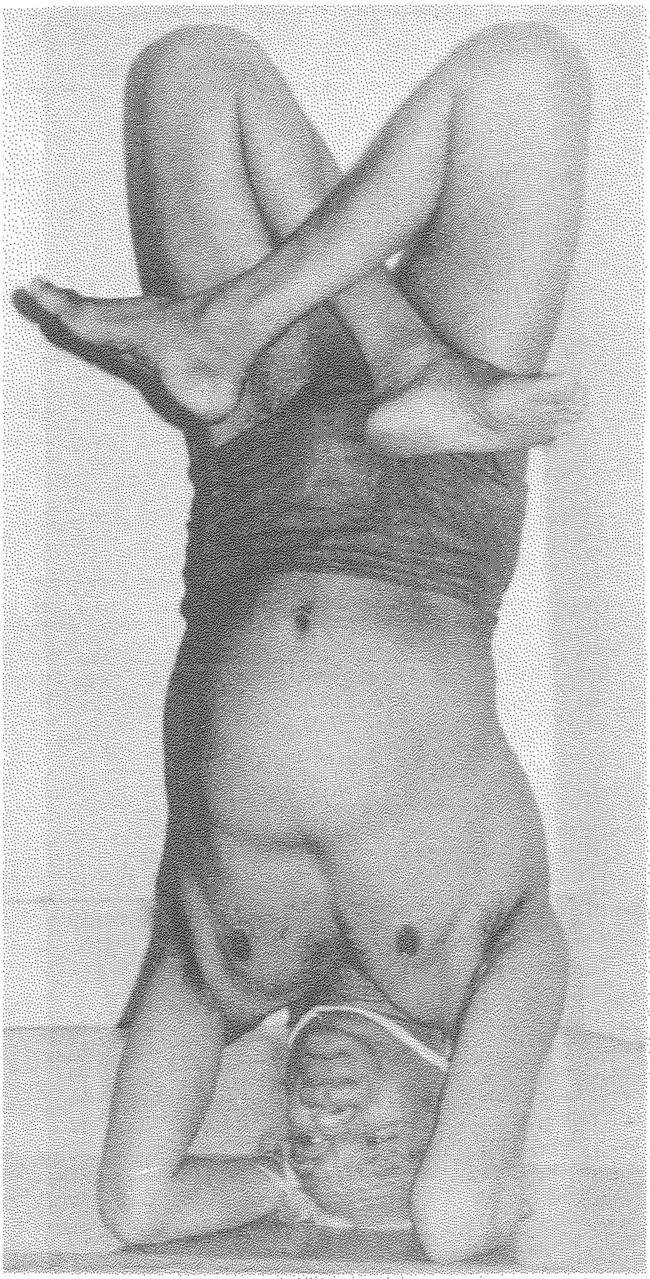


68 Pārśvaika Pāda Śīrṣāsana



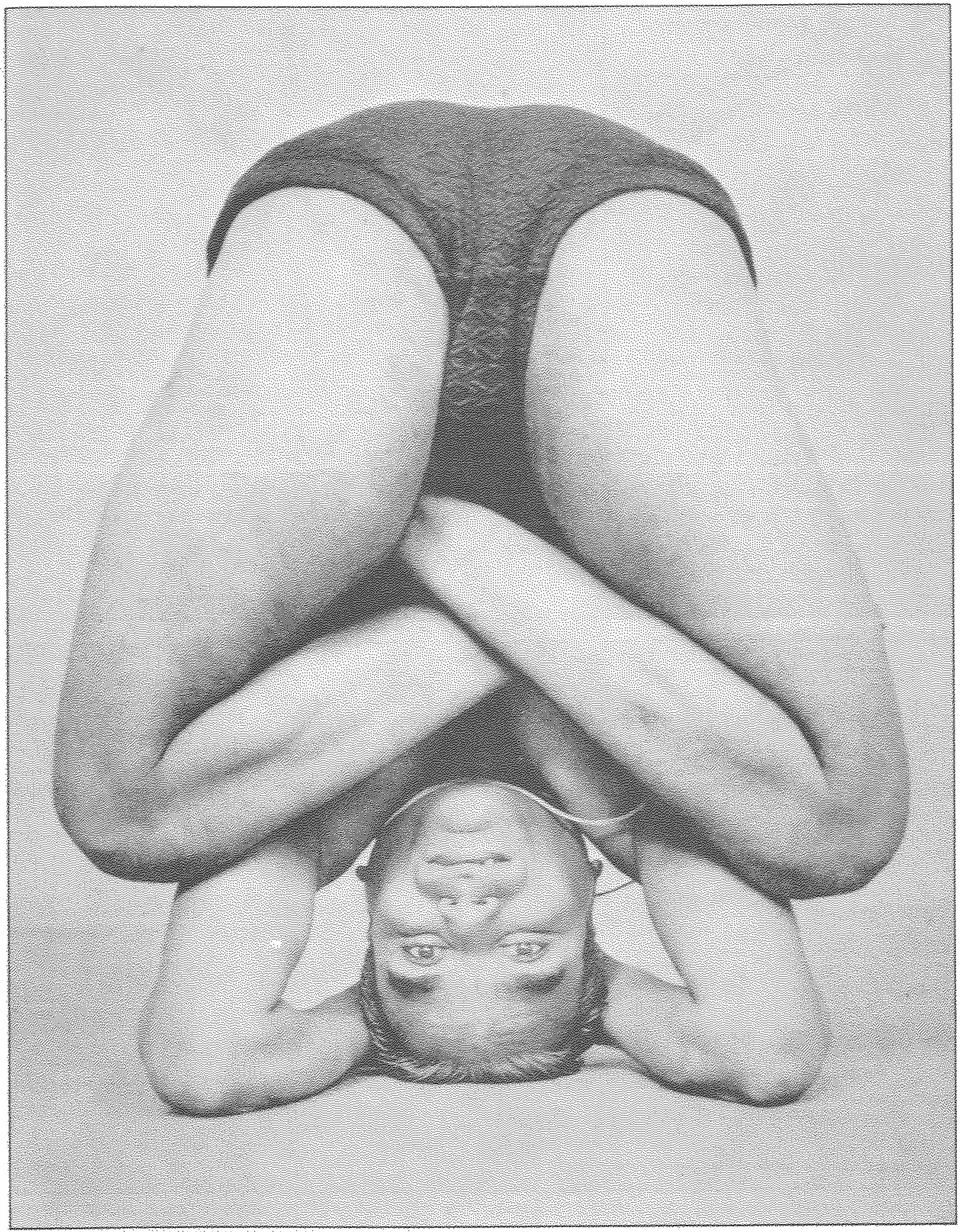
69 Eka Pāda Śīrṣāsana





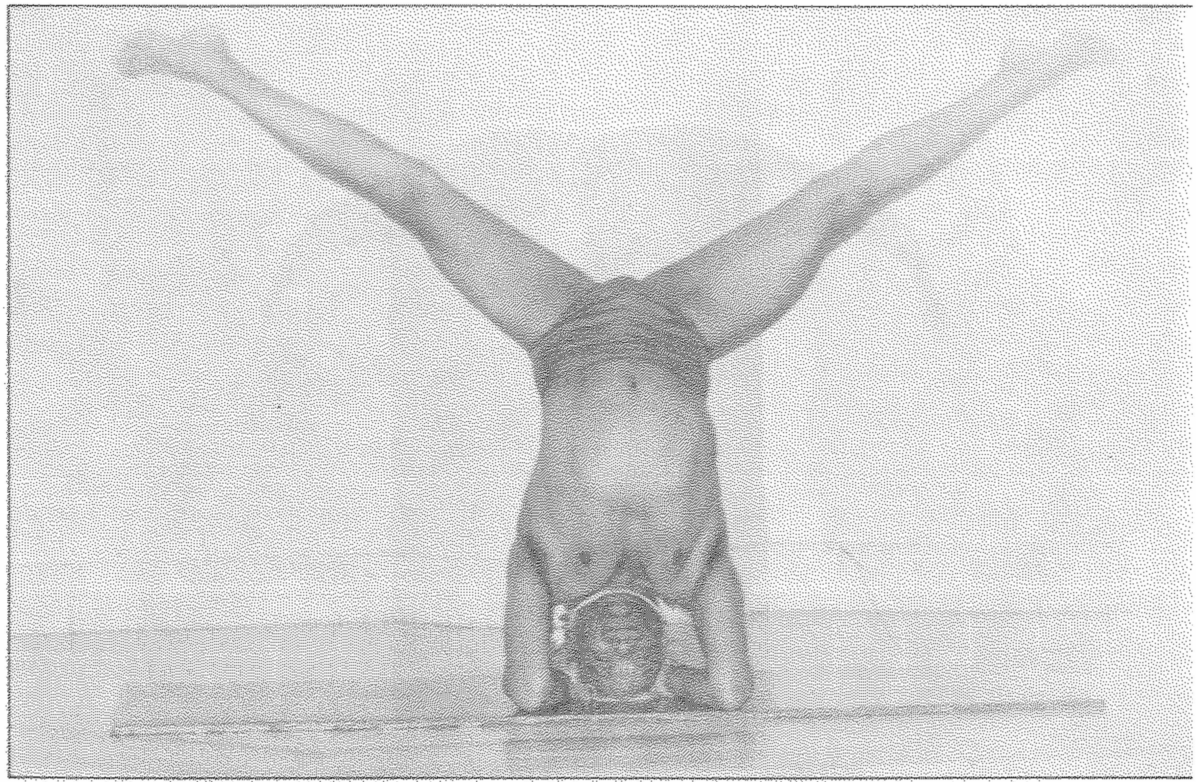
70 Ūrdhva Padmāsana in Śīrṣāsana

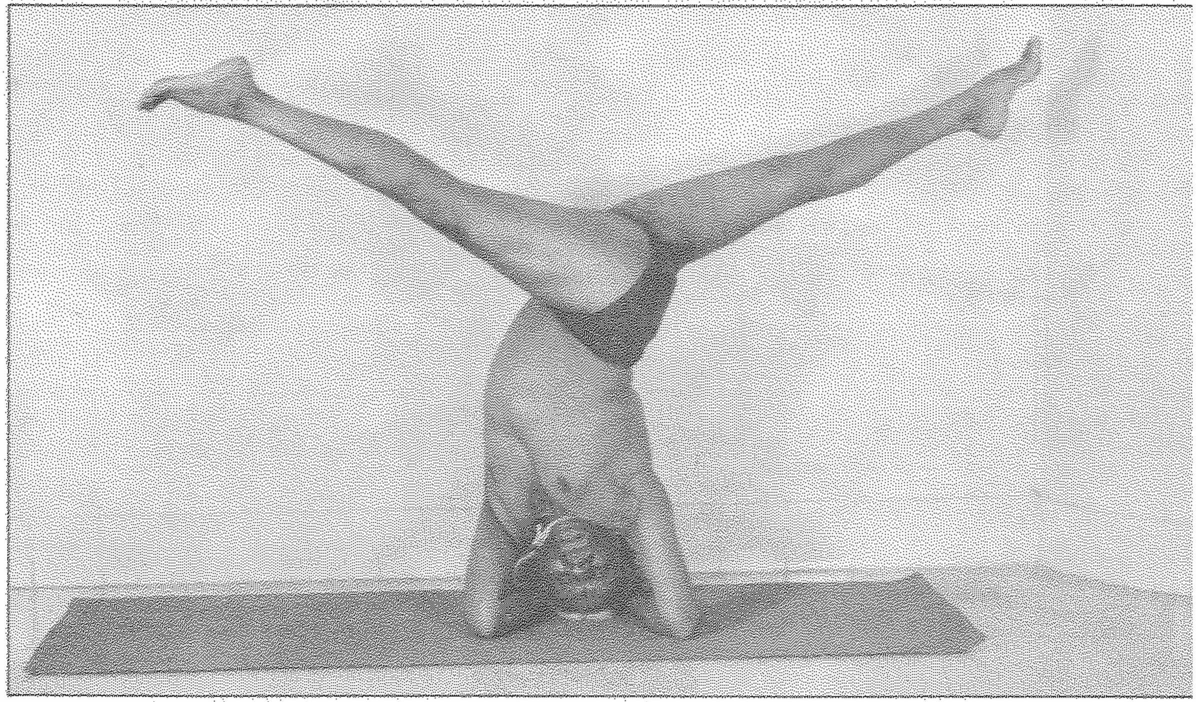
71 Pārśva Ūrdhva Padmāsana in Śīrṣāsana



Fulfilment

72 Piṇḍāsana in Śīrṣāsana

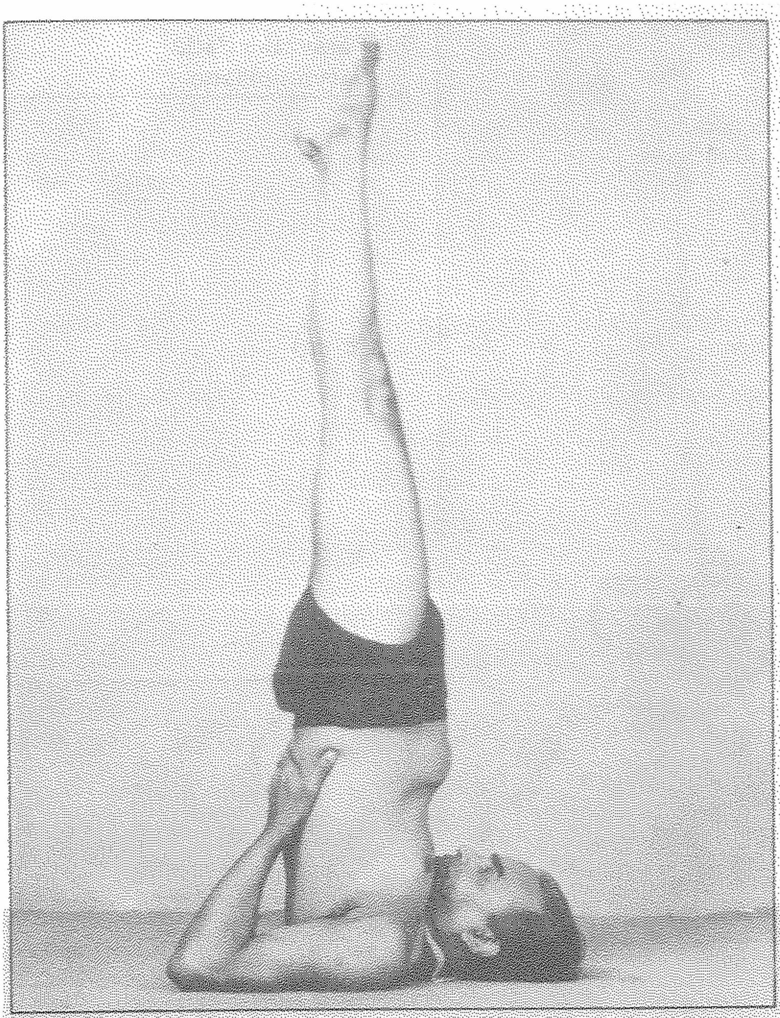




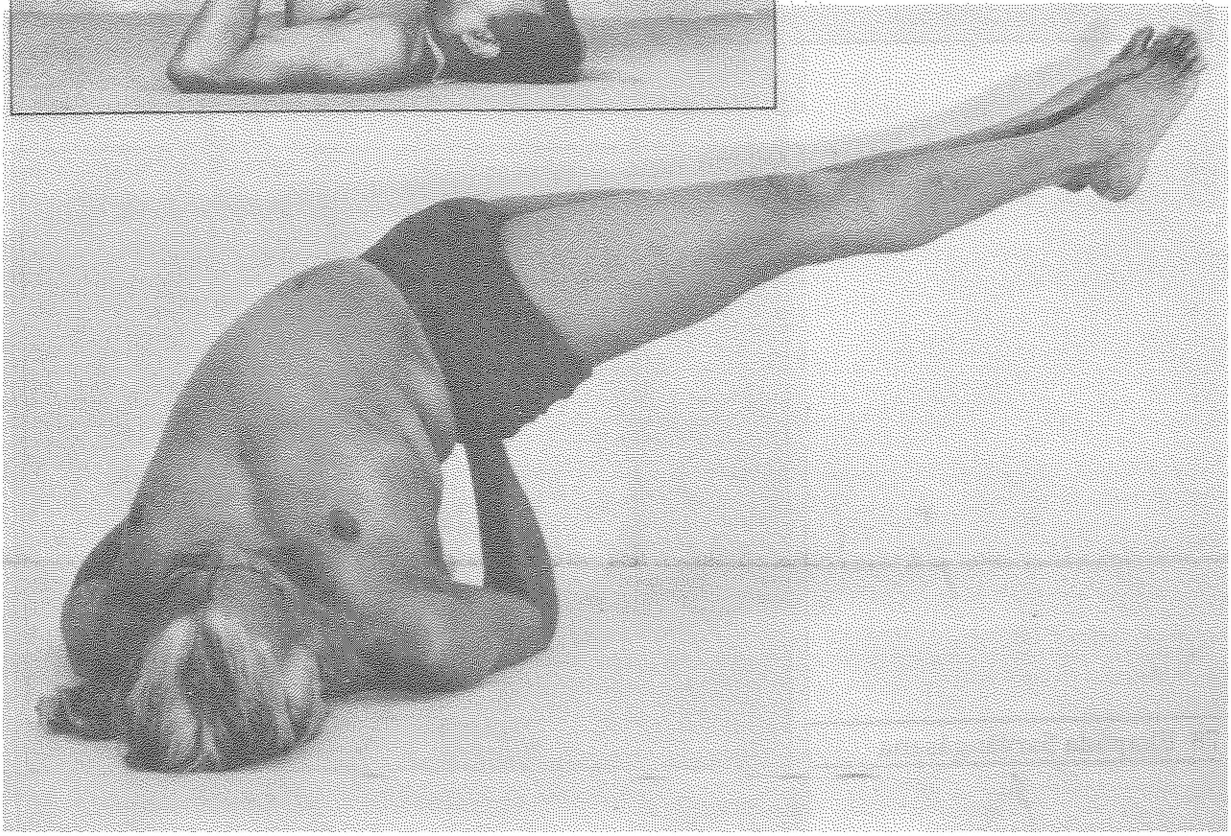
Mighty Stride in Space

73 Upaviṣṭa Koṇāsana in Śīrṣāsana

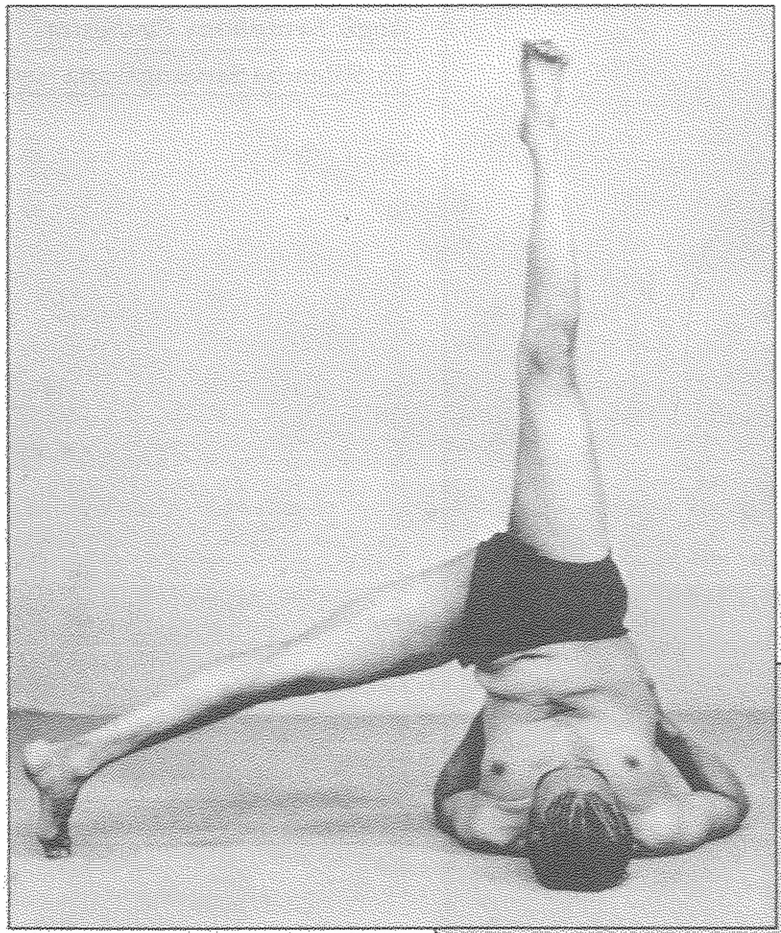
74 Parivṛttaika Pāda Śīrṣāsana



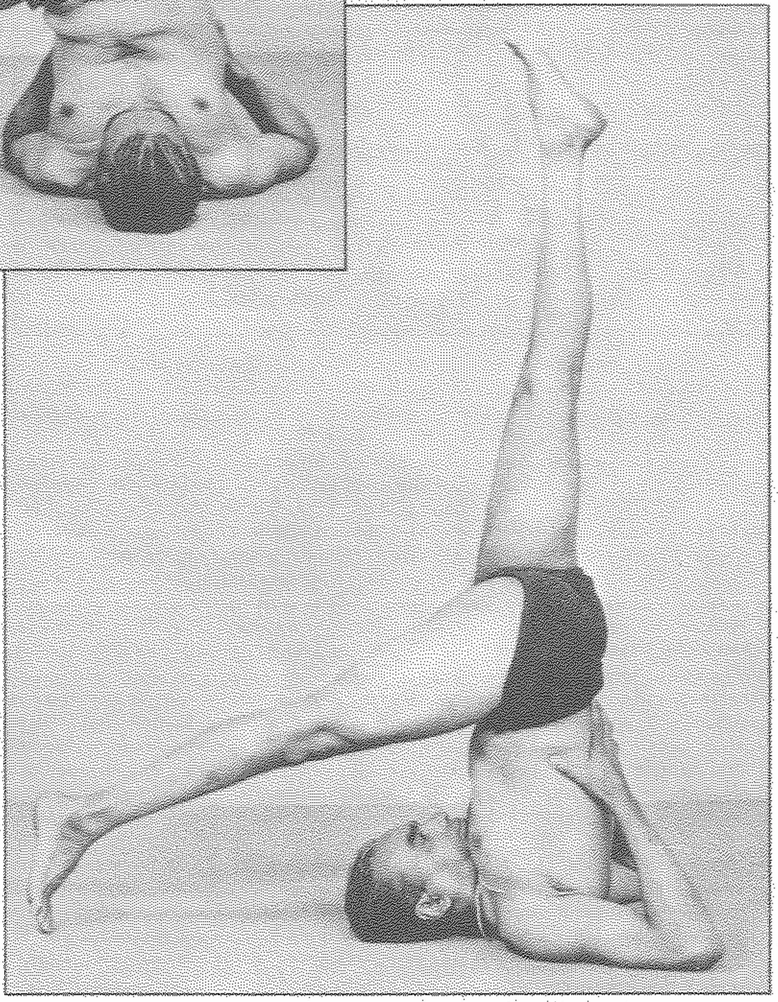
75 Sālamba Sarvāngāsana



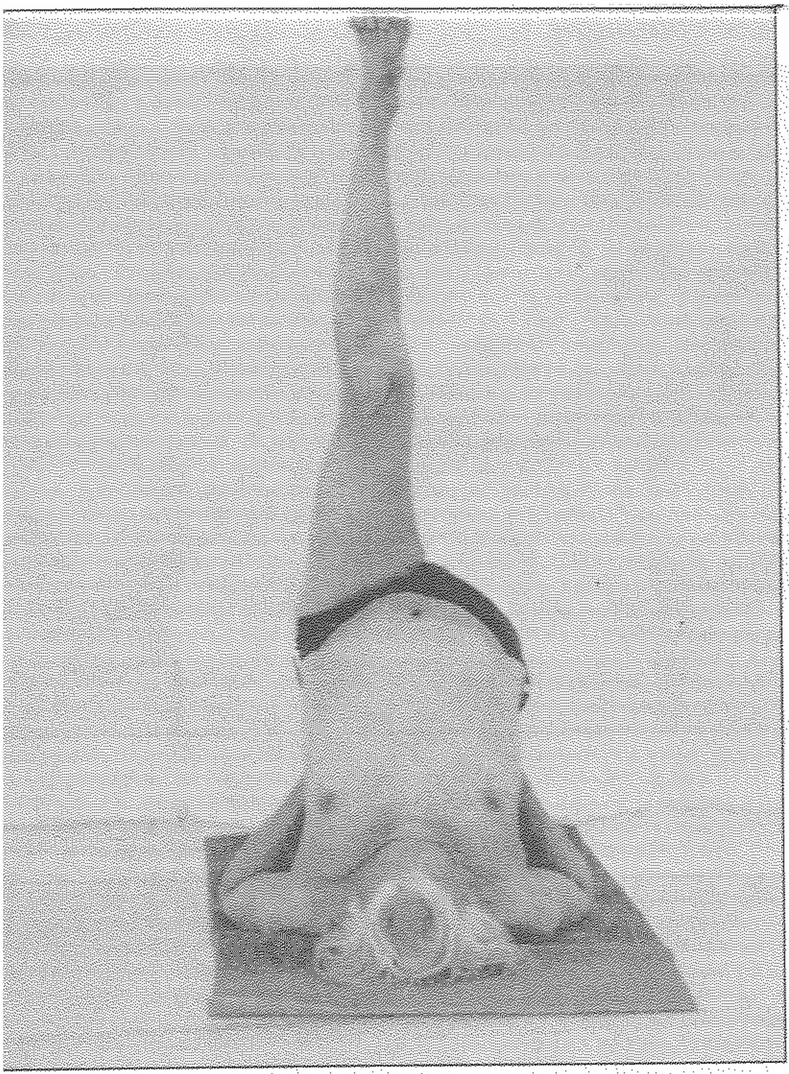
76 Pārśva Sarvāngāsana



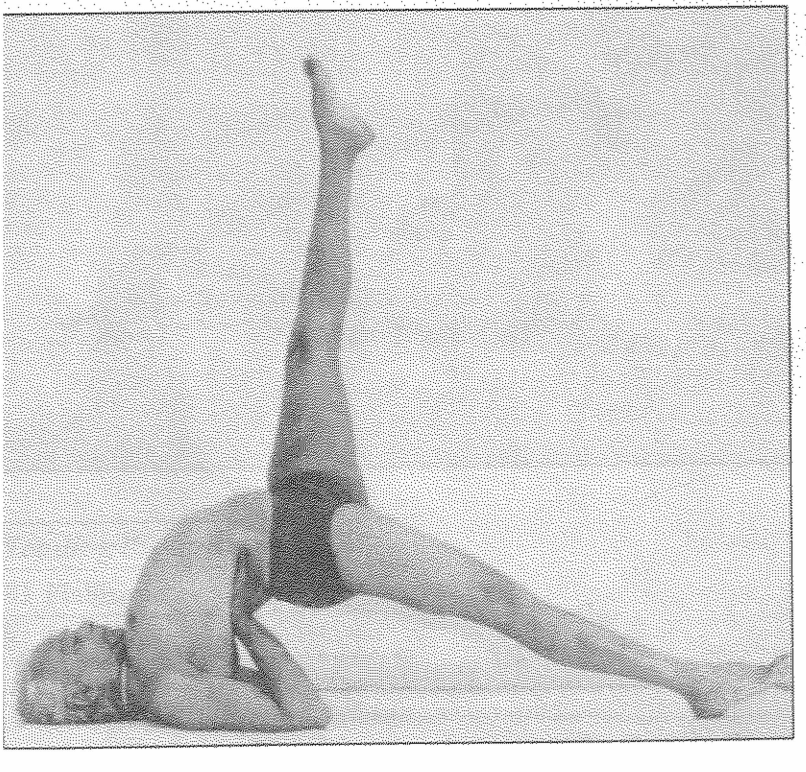
77 Pārśvaika Pāda Sarvāngāsana

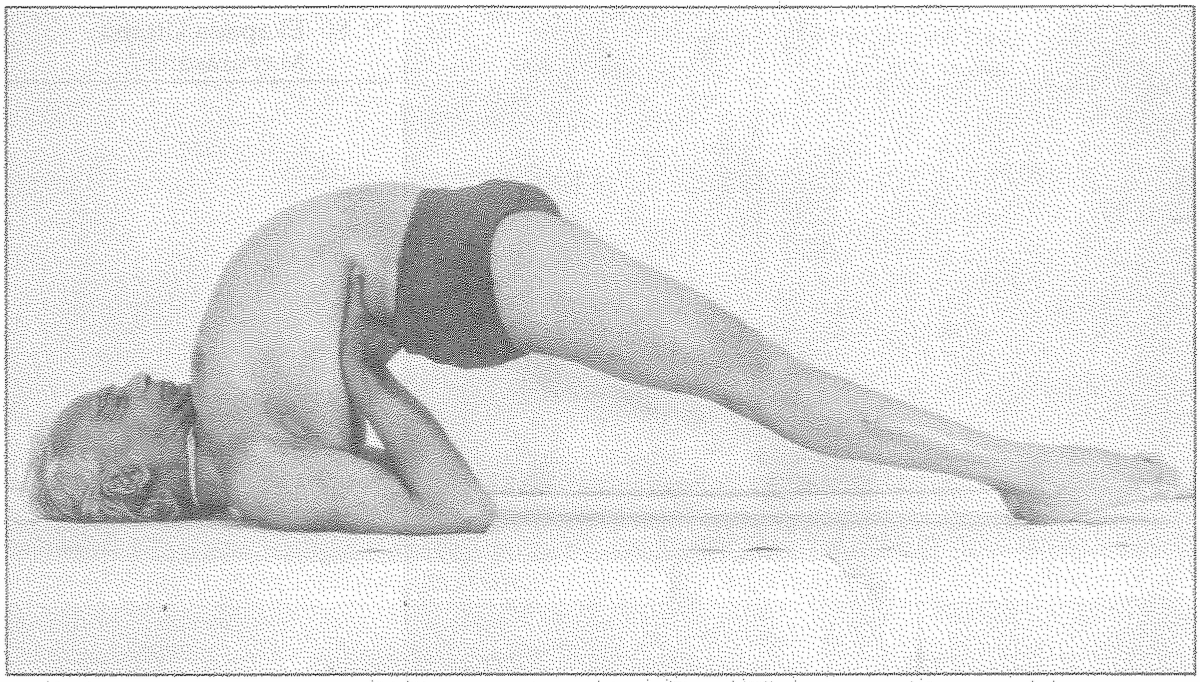


78 Ekapāda Sarvāngāsana



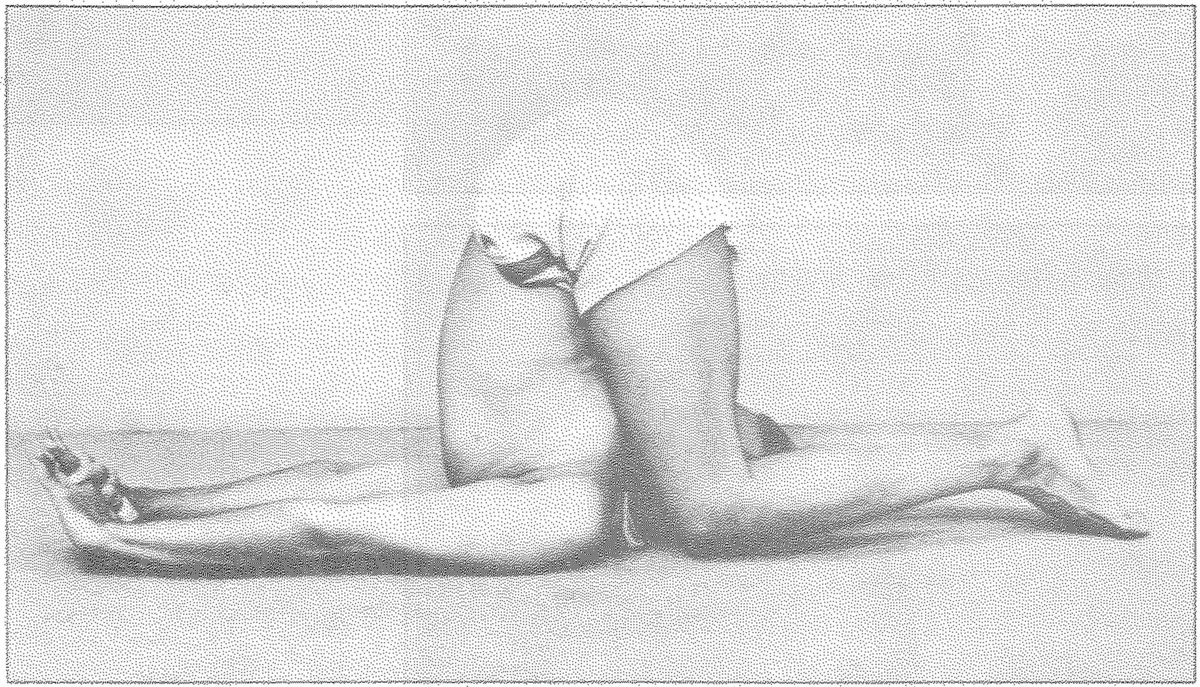
79, 80 Ekapāda Uttāna Mayūrāsana





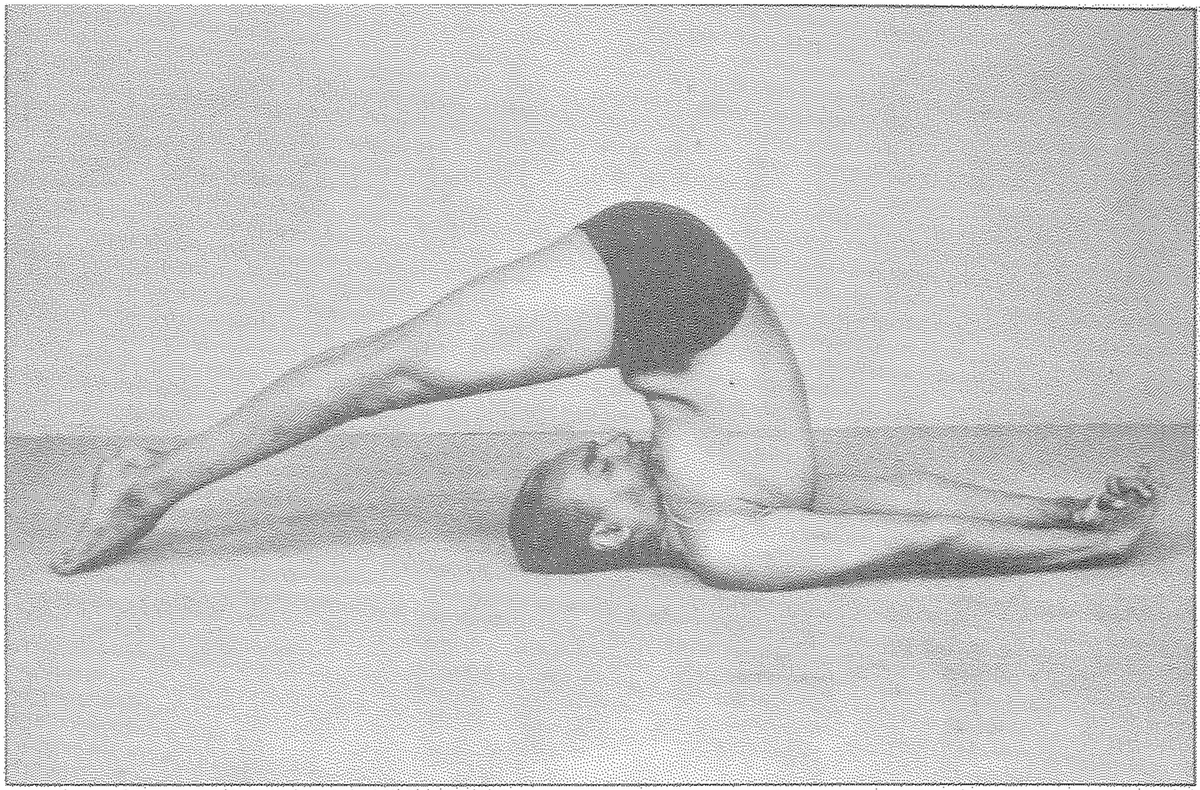
Elating Elevator

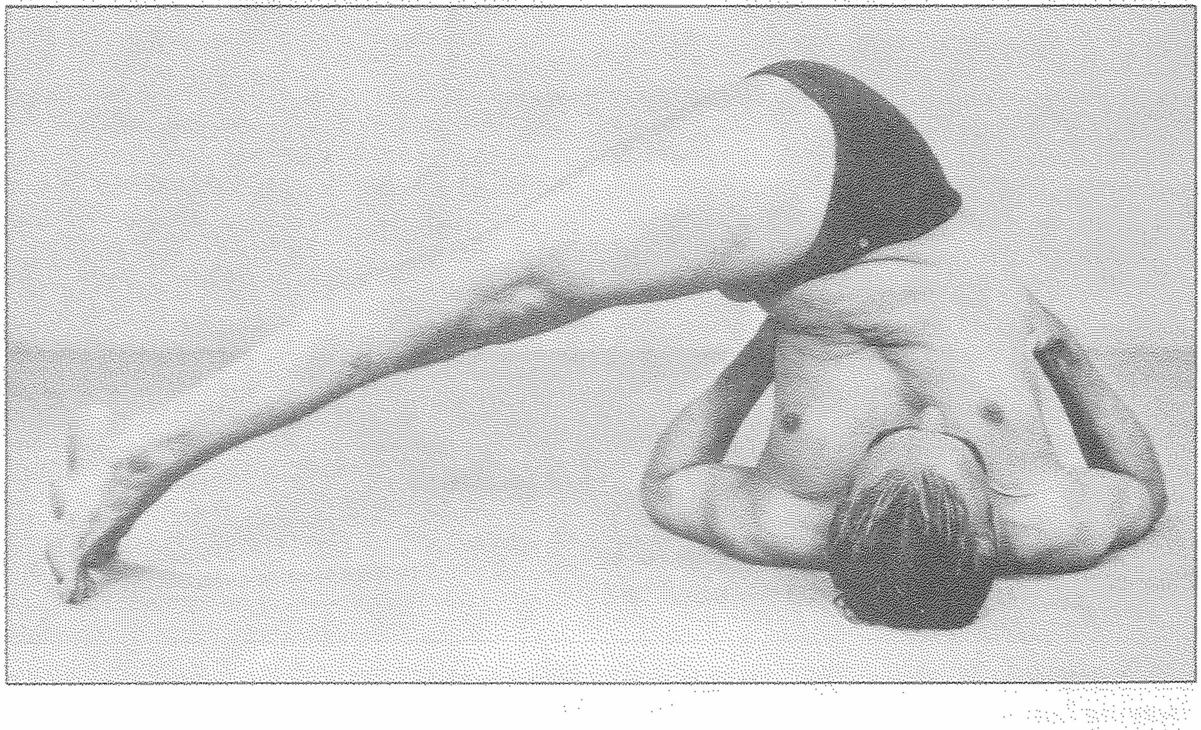
81 Uttāna Mayūrāsana



Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil

82 Karṇapīḍāsana

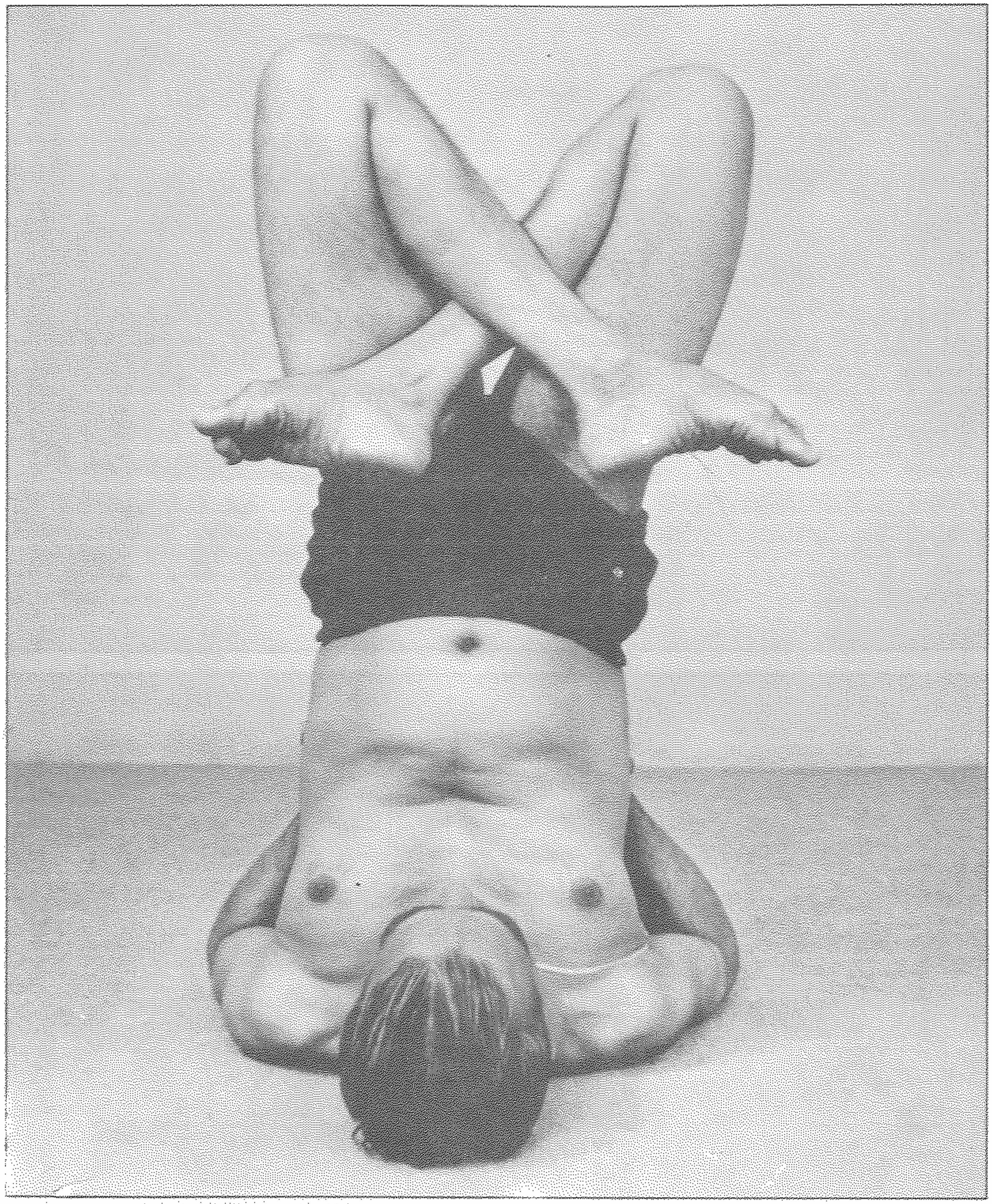




Tending the Spiritual Soil

83 Halāsana

84 Pārśva Halāsana

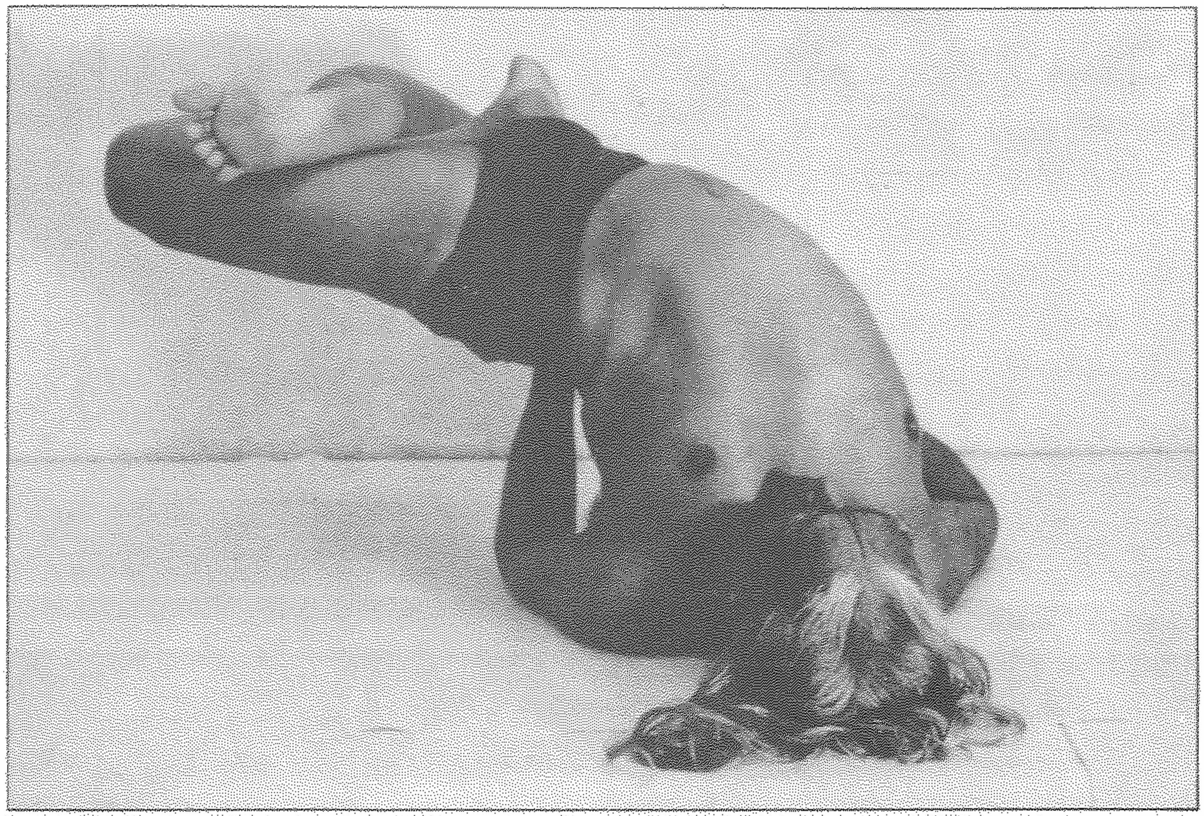


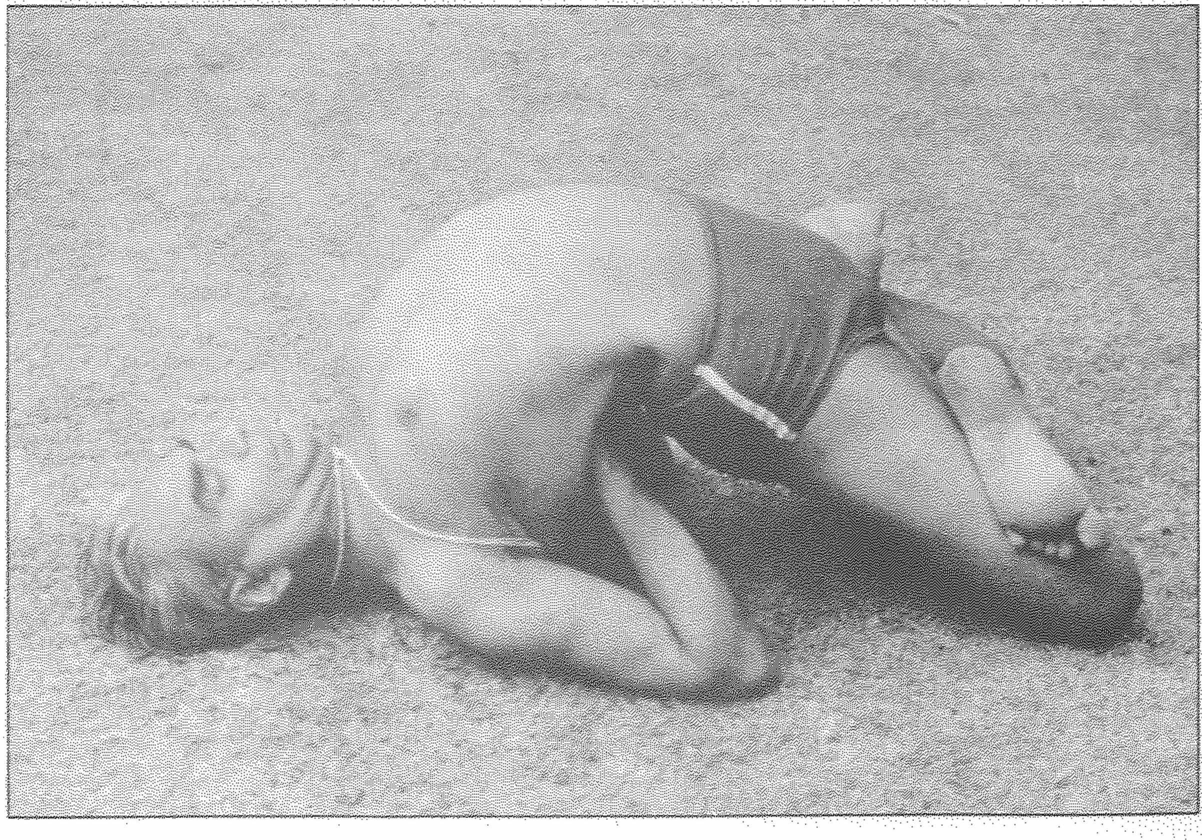
Swaying Lotus

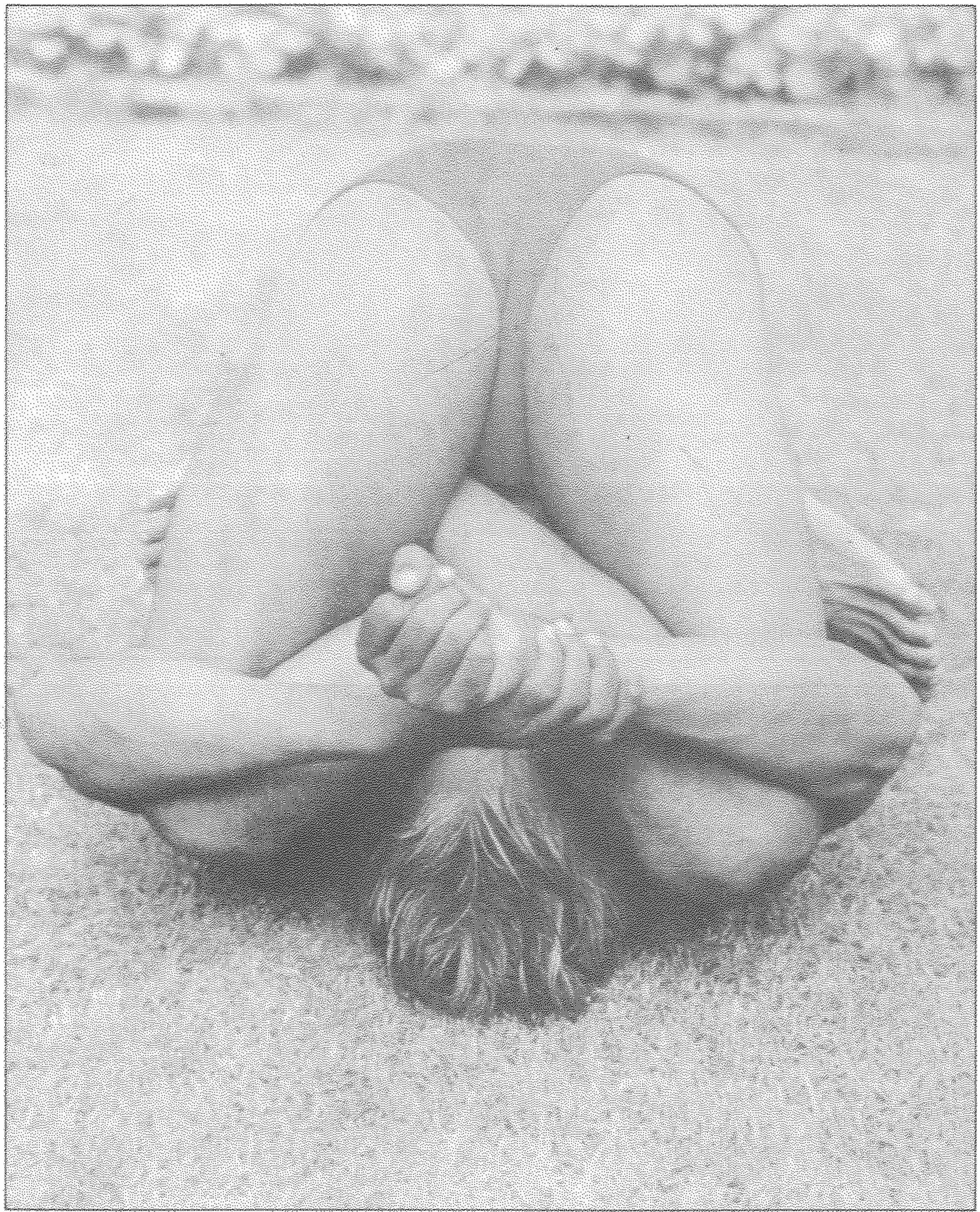
85 Ūrdhva Padmāsana in Sarvāngāsana

86 Pārśva Ūrdhva Padmāsana in Sarvāngāsana

87 Uttāna Padma Mayūrāsana

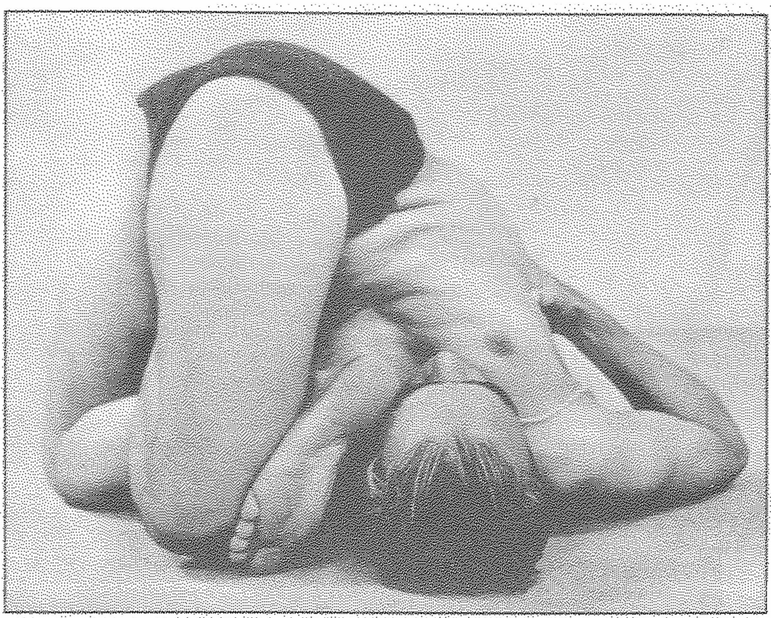






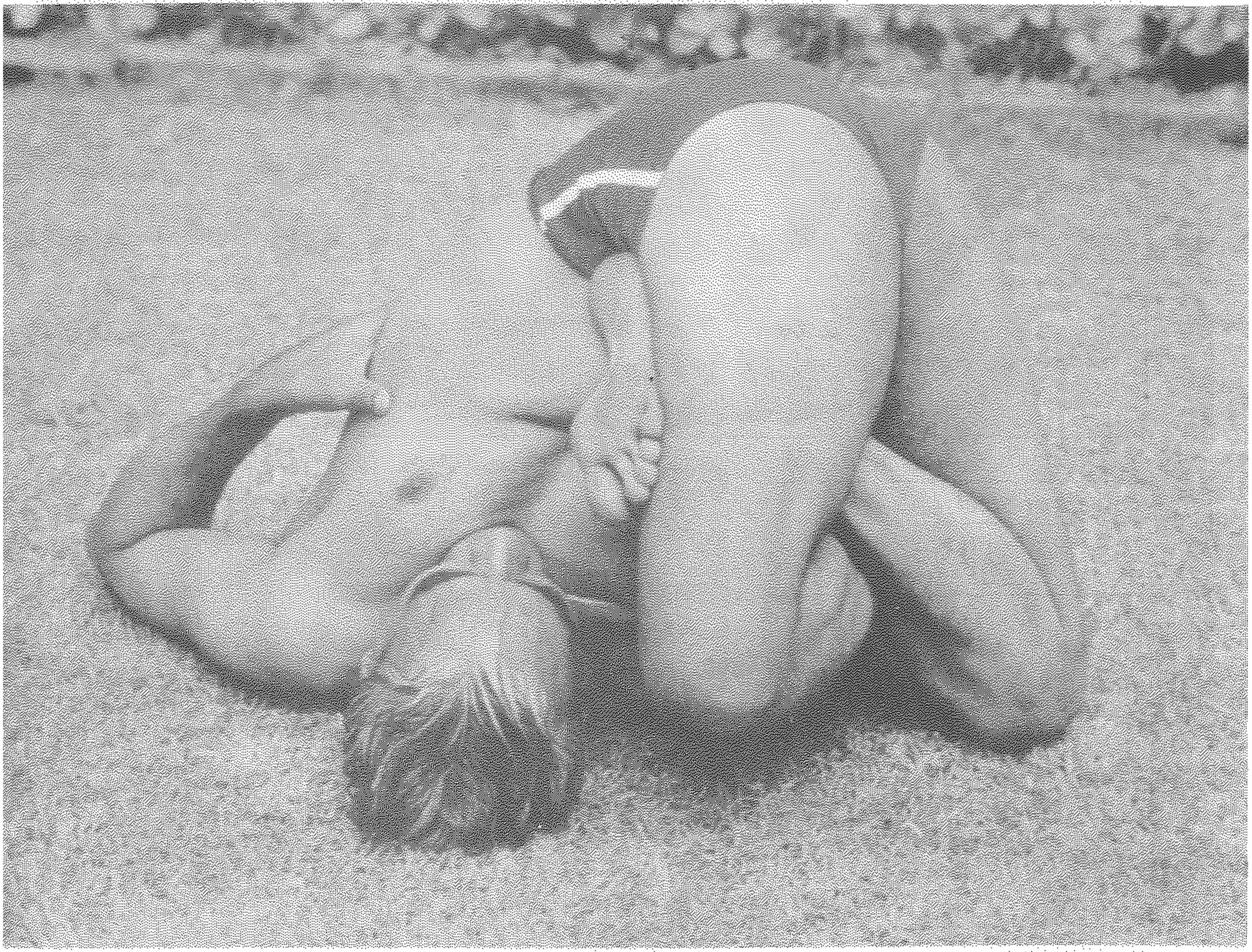
Knots of Contentment

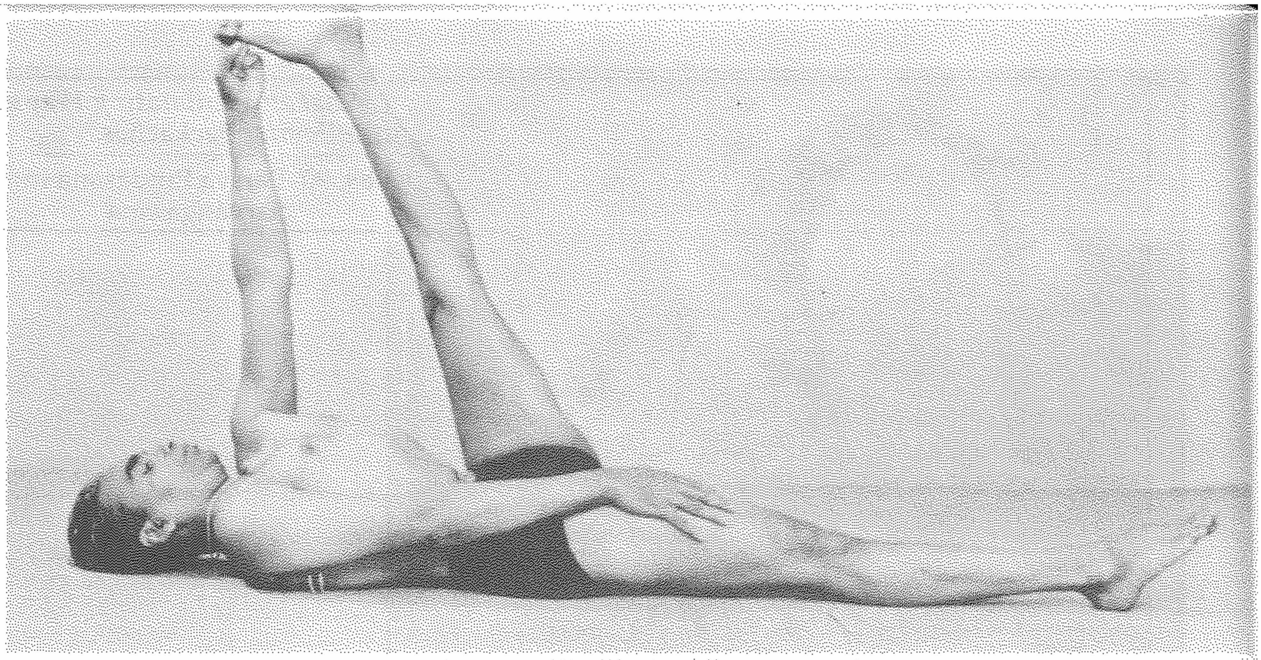
88 Piṇḍāsana in Sarvāṅgāsana

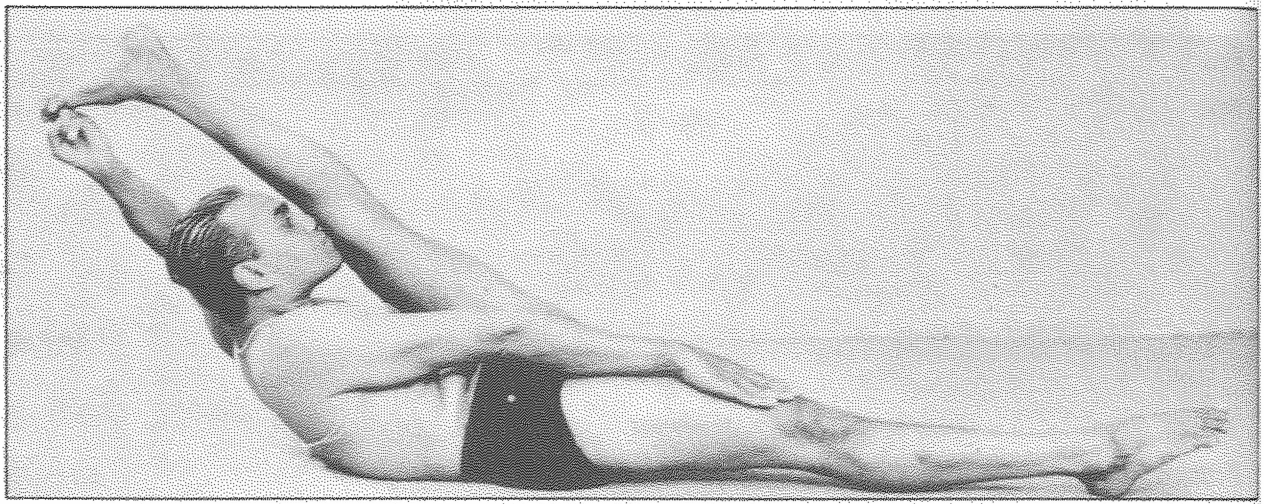


What an Exhilarating Way of Relieving Backaches!

89, 90 Pārśva Piṇḍāsana in Sarvāṅgāsana

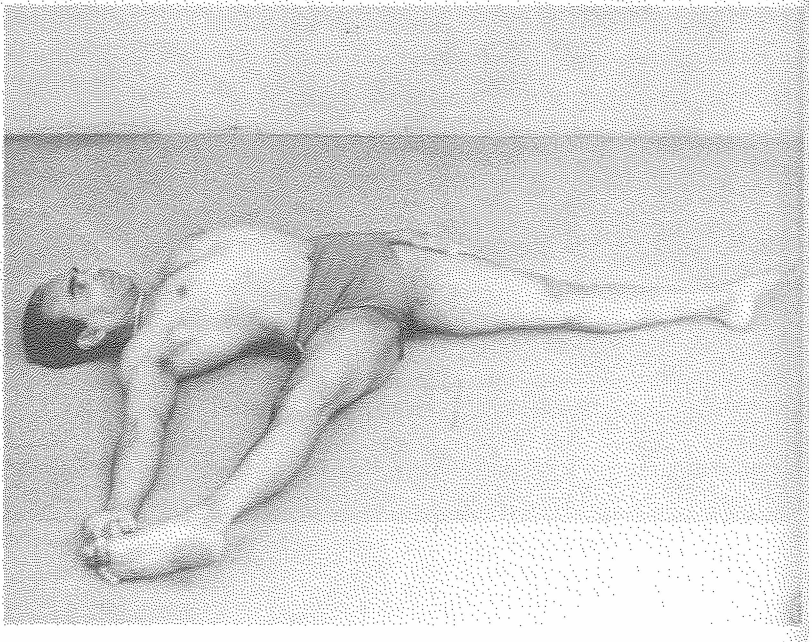


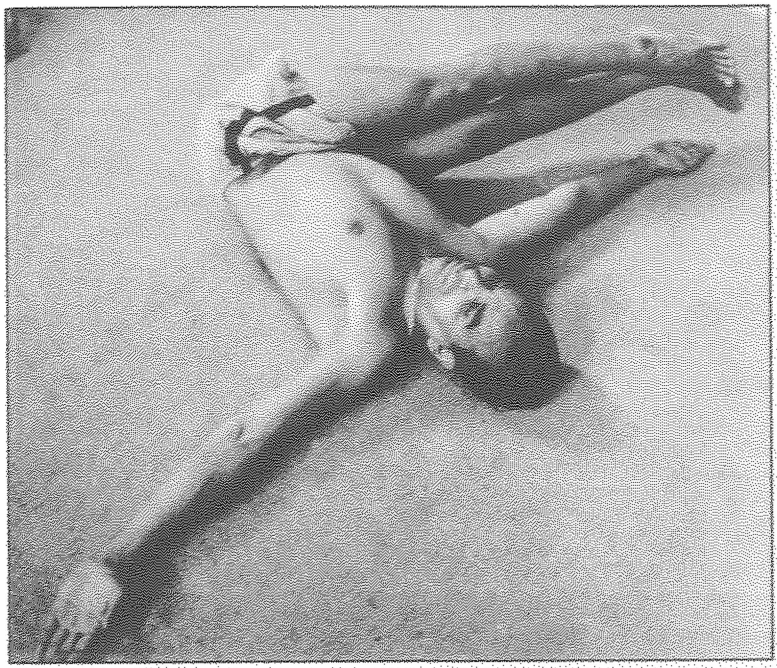




Towers of Steel

91, 92, 93 Supta Pādāngusthāsana



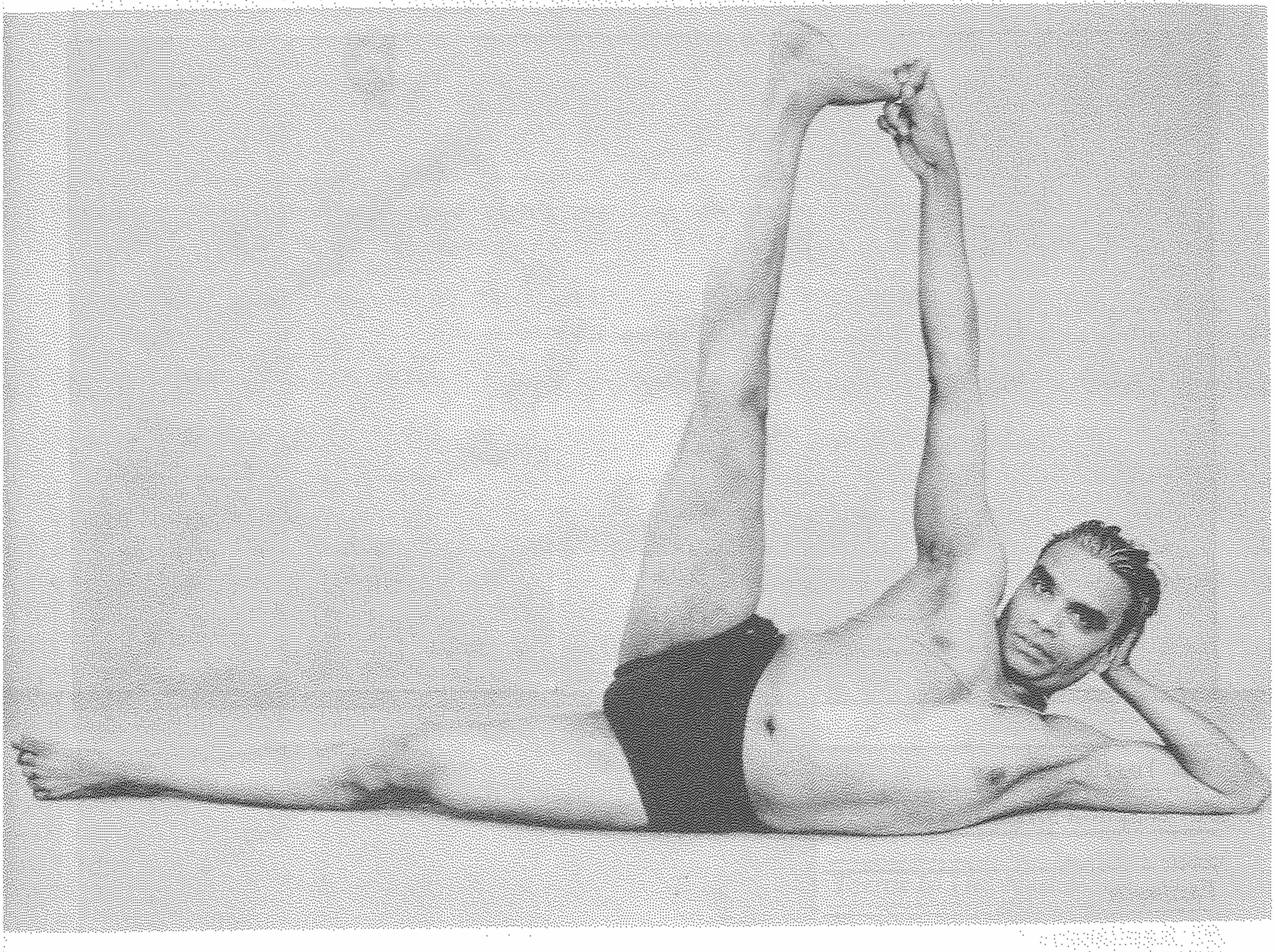


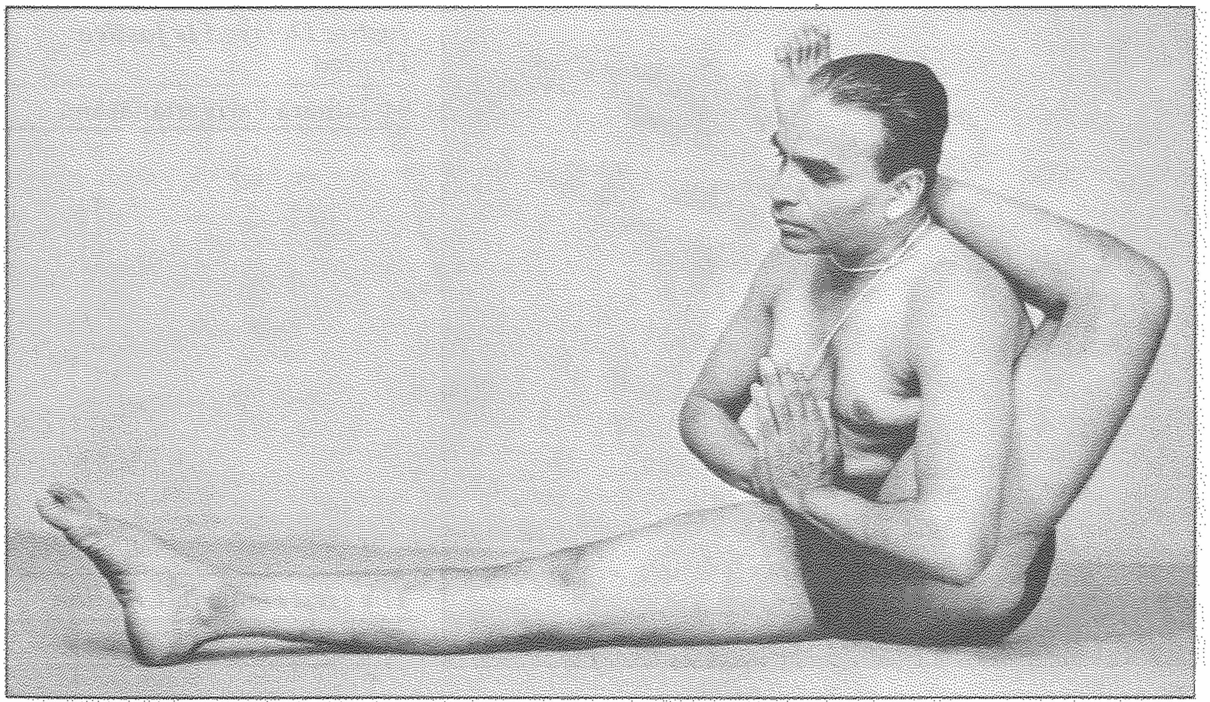
Justice Delayed Is Justice Denied

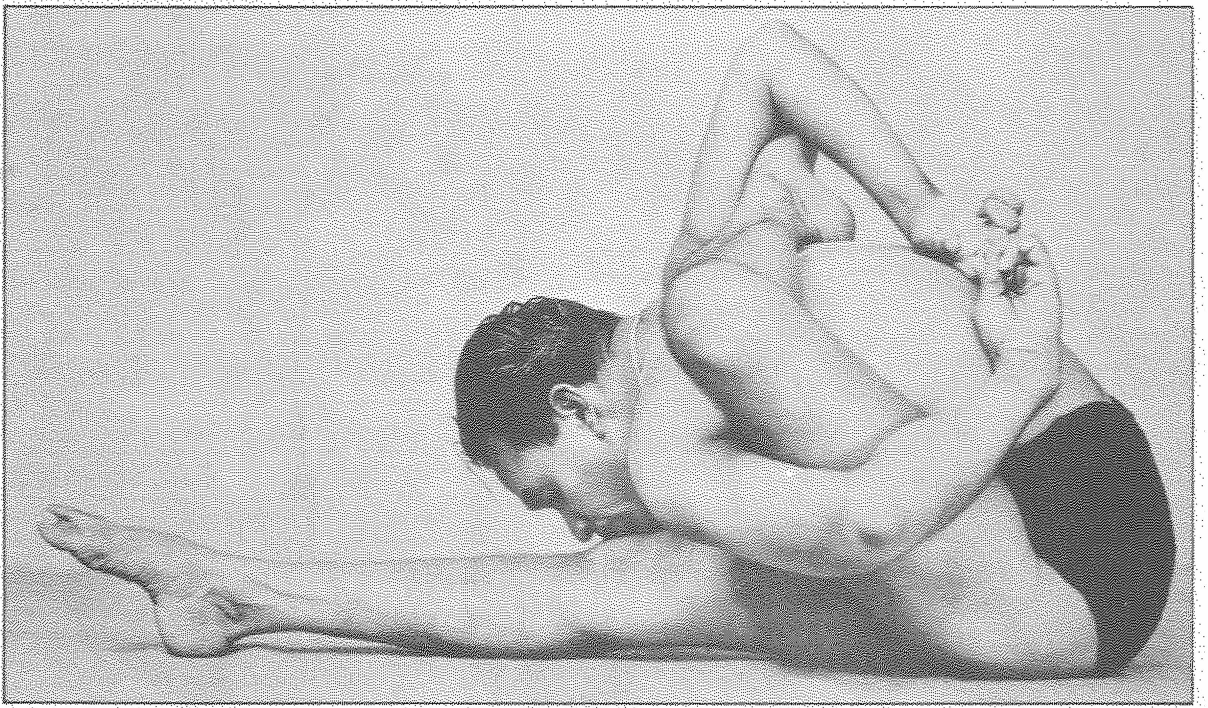
94 Jathara Parivartanāsana

The First Flame of Creation

95 Anantāsana





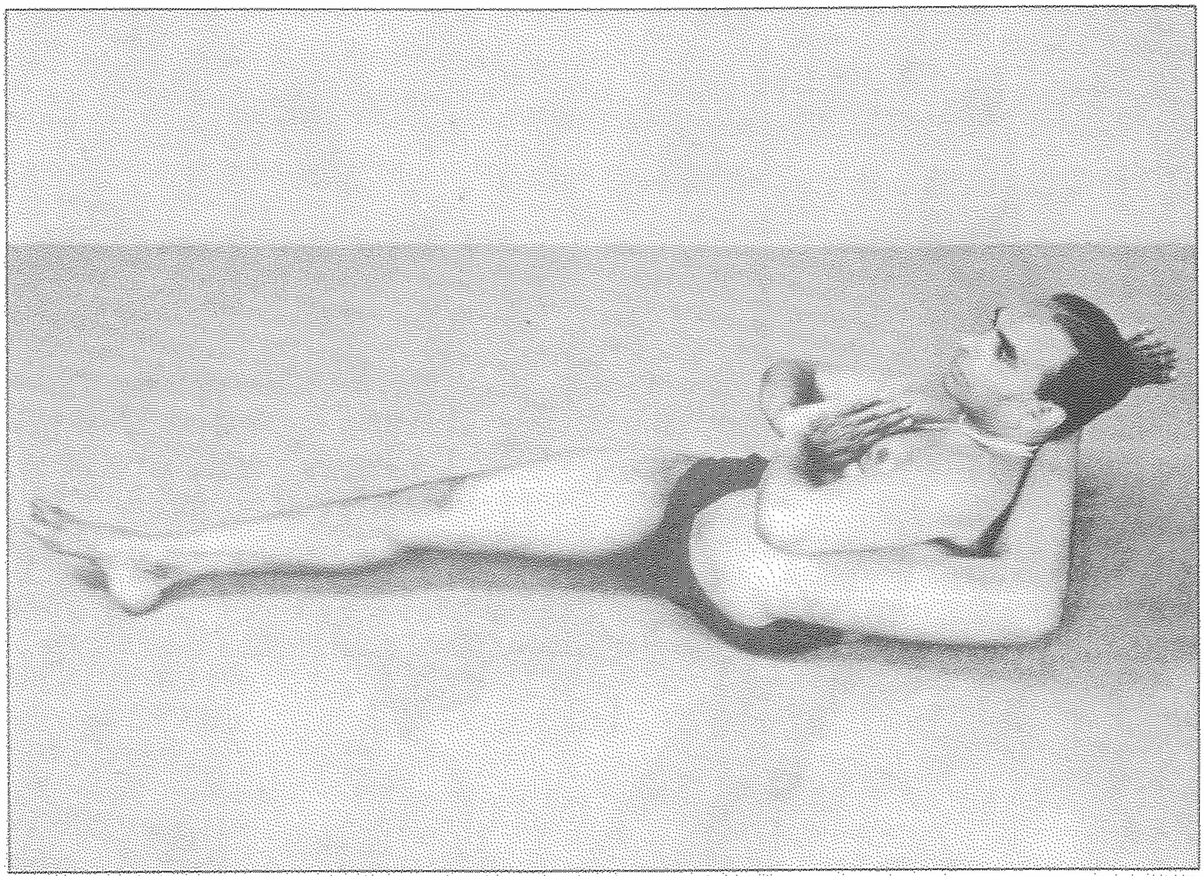


The Yogi's Penance

96 Ekapāda Śīrṣāsana

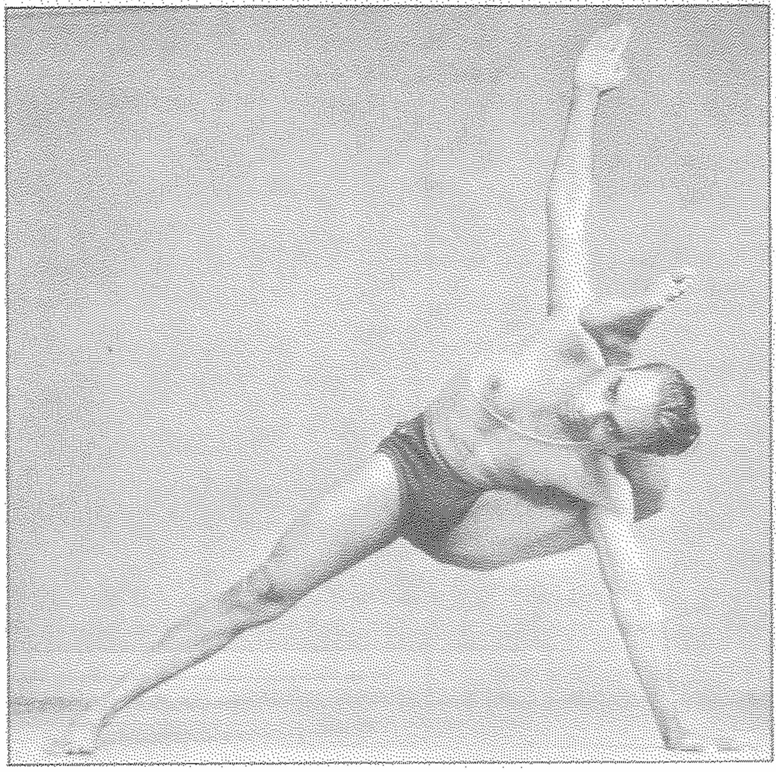
Fantastic

97 Kapilāsana



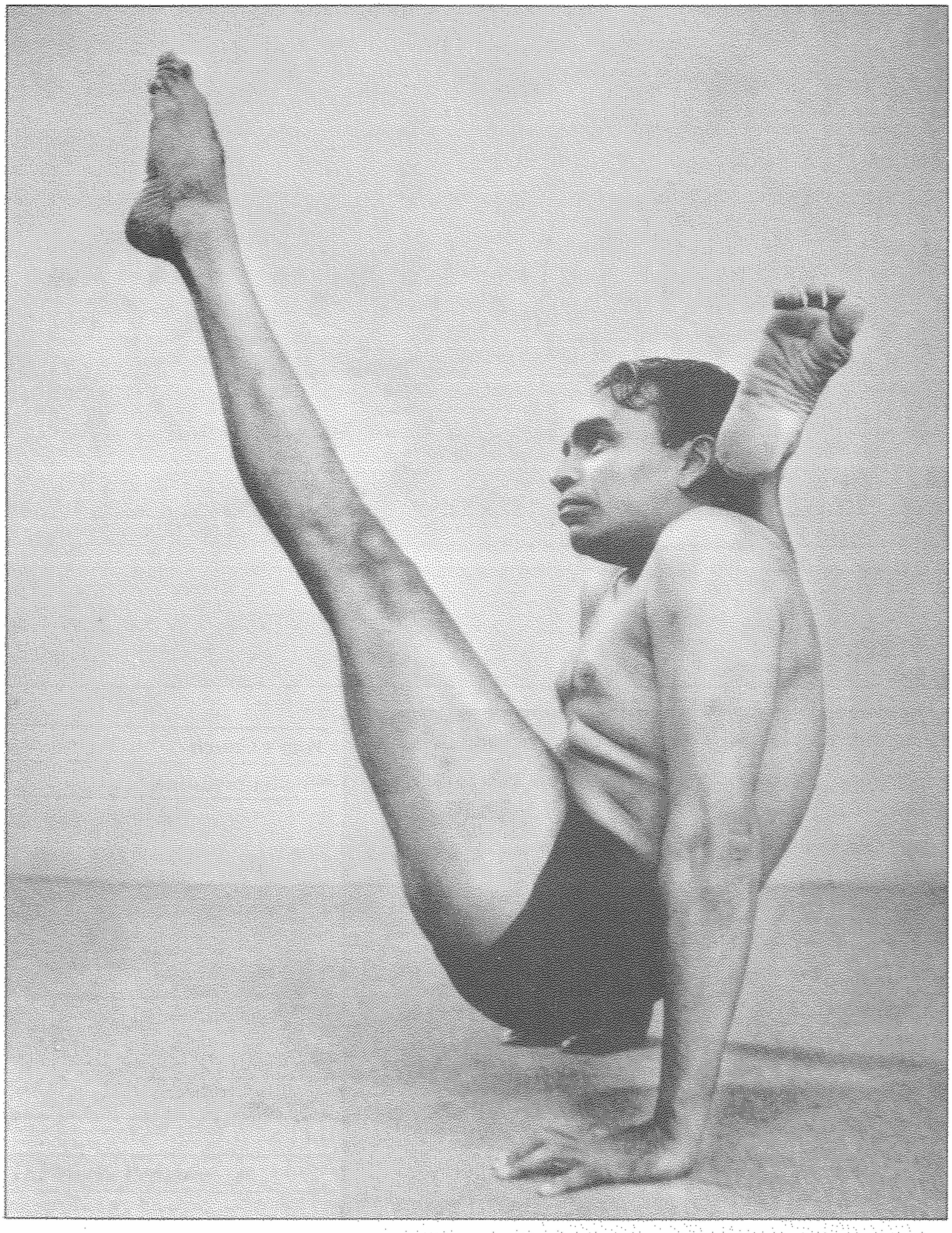
Yogi's Couch

98 Bhairavāsana



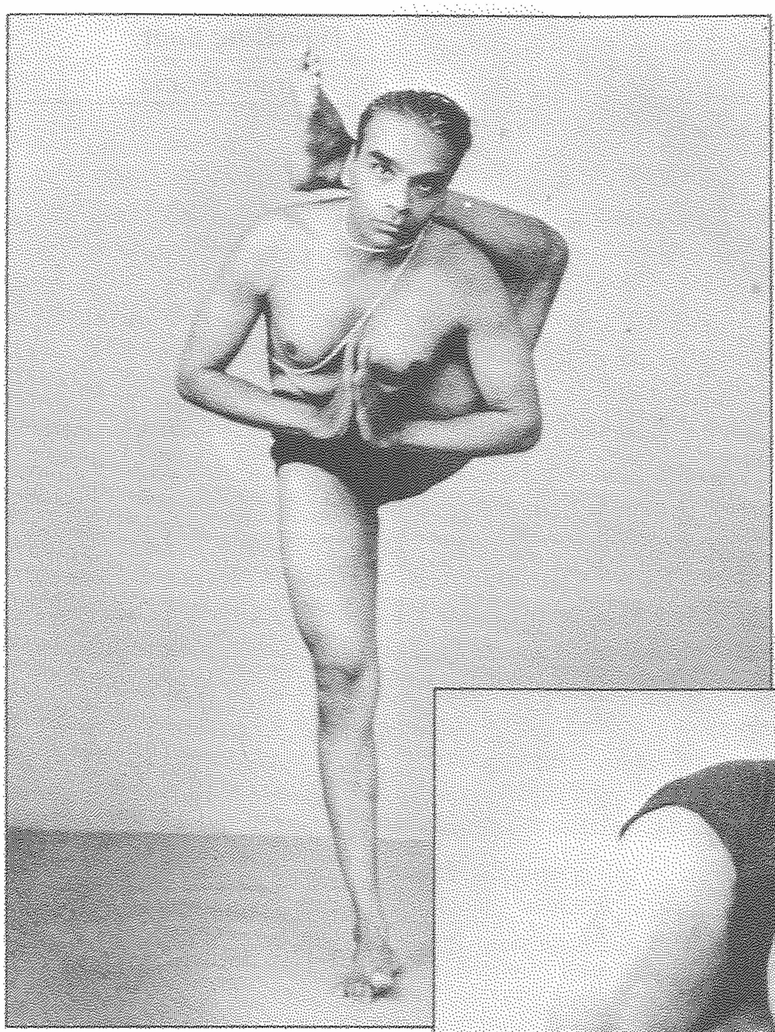
Terror Is Thy Name

99 Kāla Bhairavāsana



'V' for Victory

100 Cakorāsana

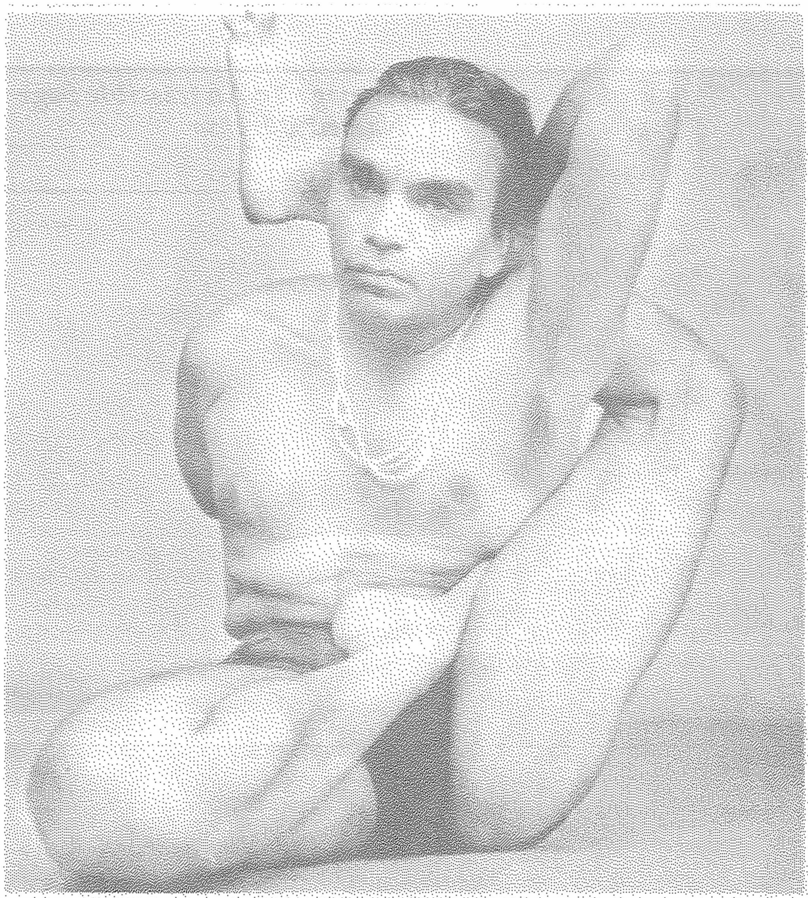


Homage To An Irascible Sage Named Dūrvāsa

101 Dūrvāsana

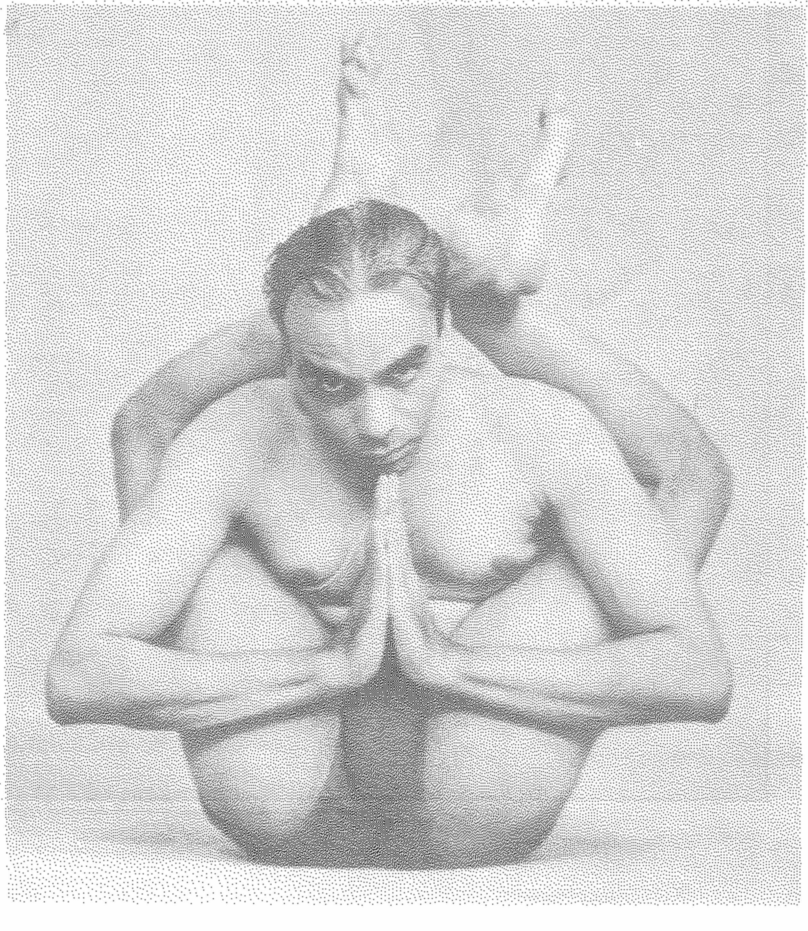
Adoration

102 Rucikāsana



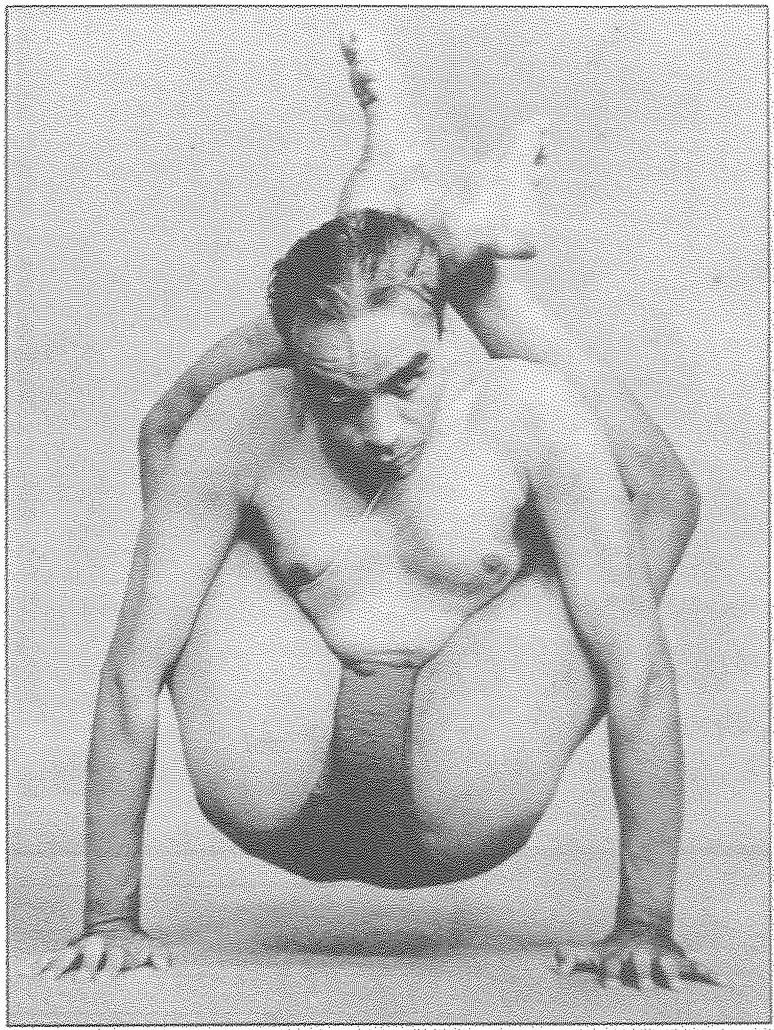
A Wrestling Bout

103 Virancyāsana



Has Anyone Seen My Legs?

104 Dvi Pāda Śīrṣāsana

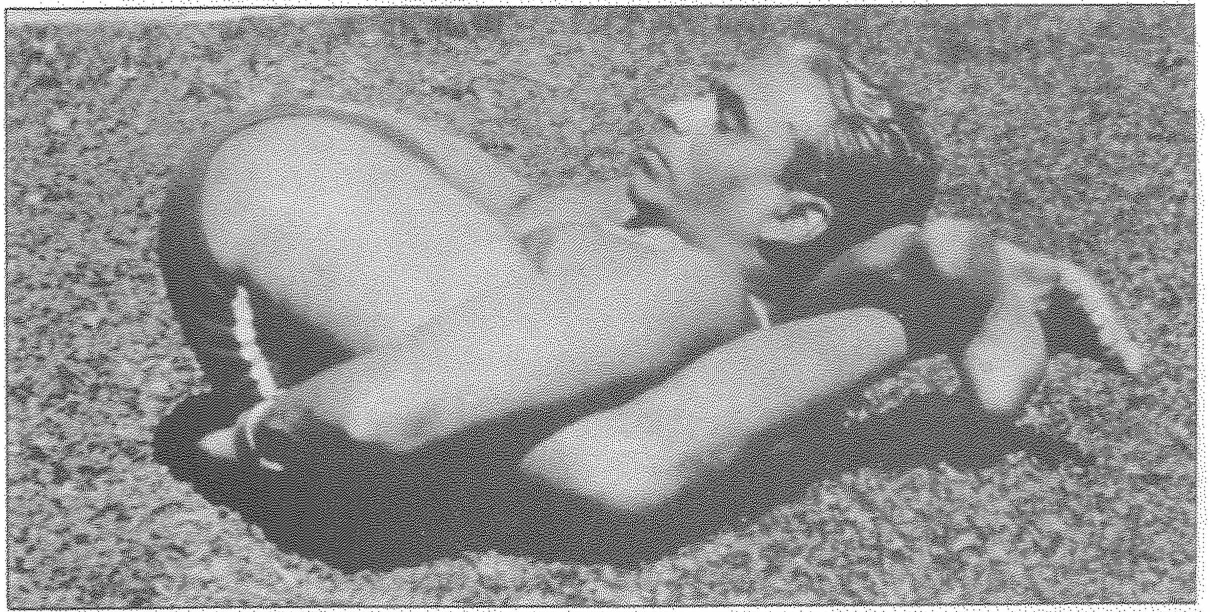


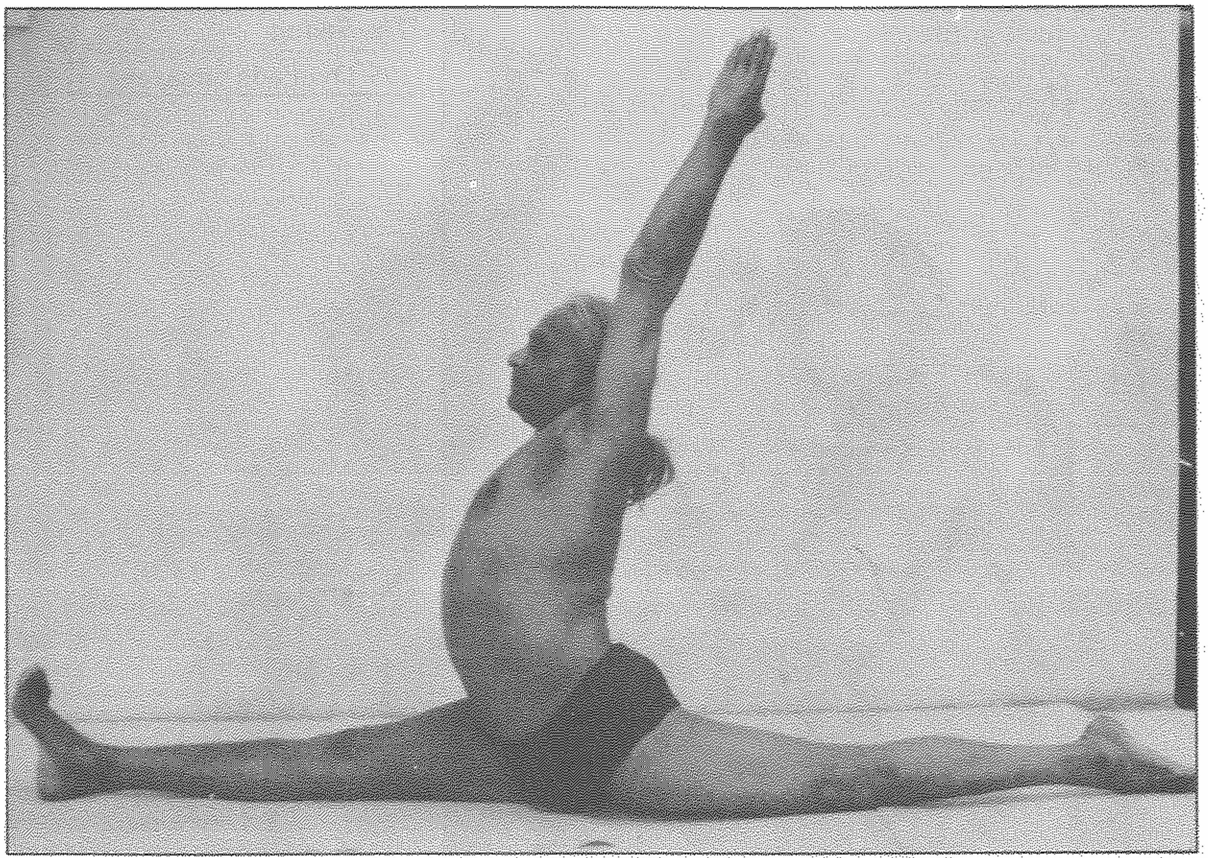
The Swing

105 Dvi Pāda Śīrṣāsana

A Nap Full of Comfort and Warmth

106 Yoganidrāsana





A Mighty Leap from West to East

107 Hanumānāsana

Unruffled Reach

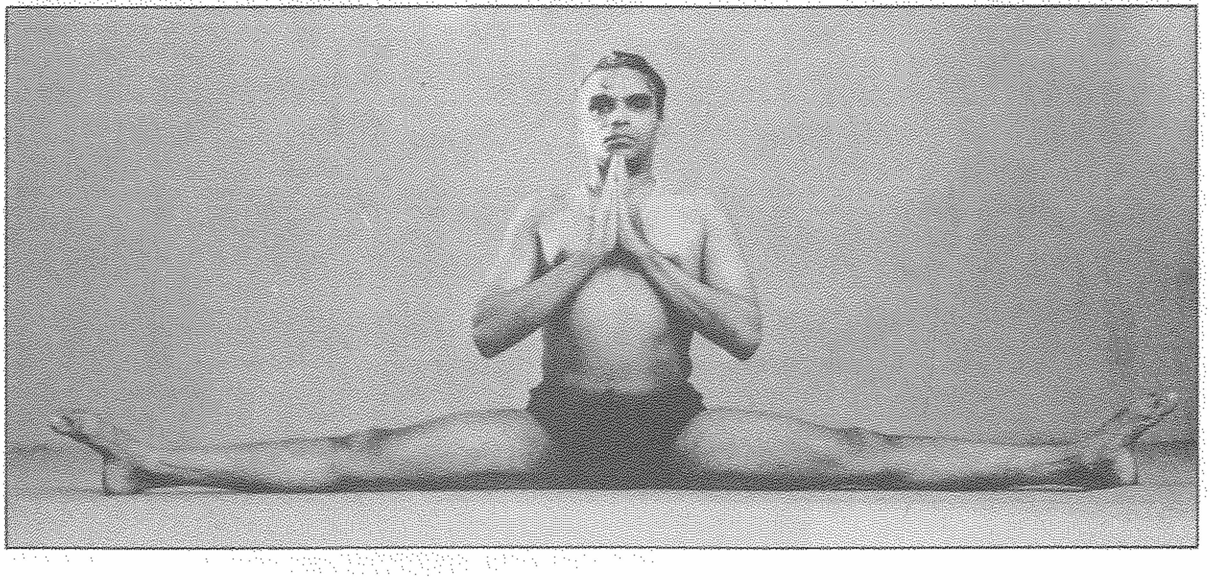
108 Samakoṇāsana

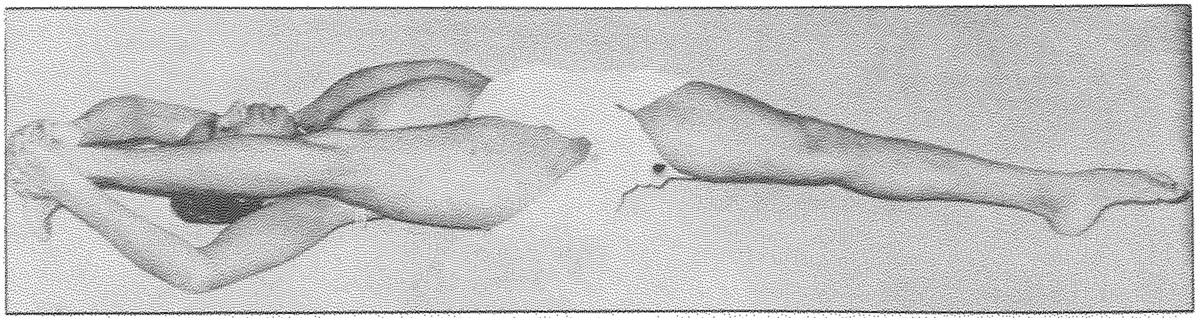
Inaccessible

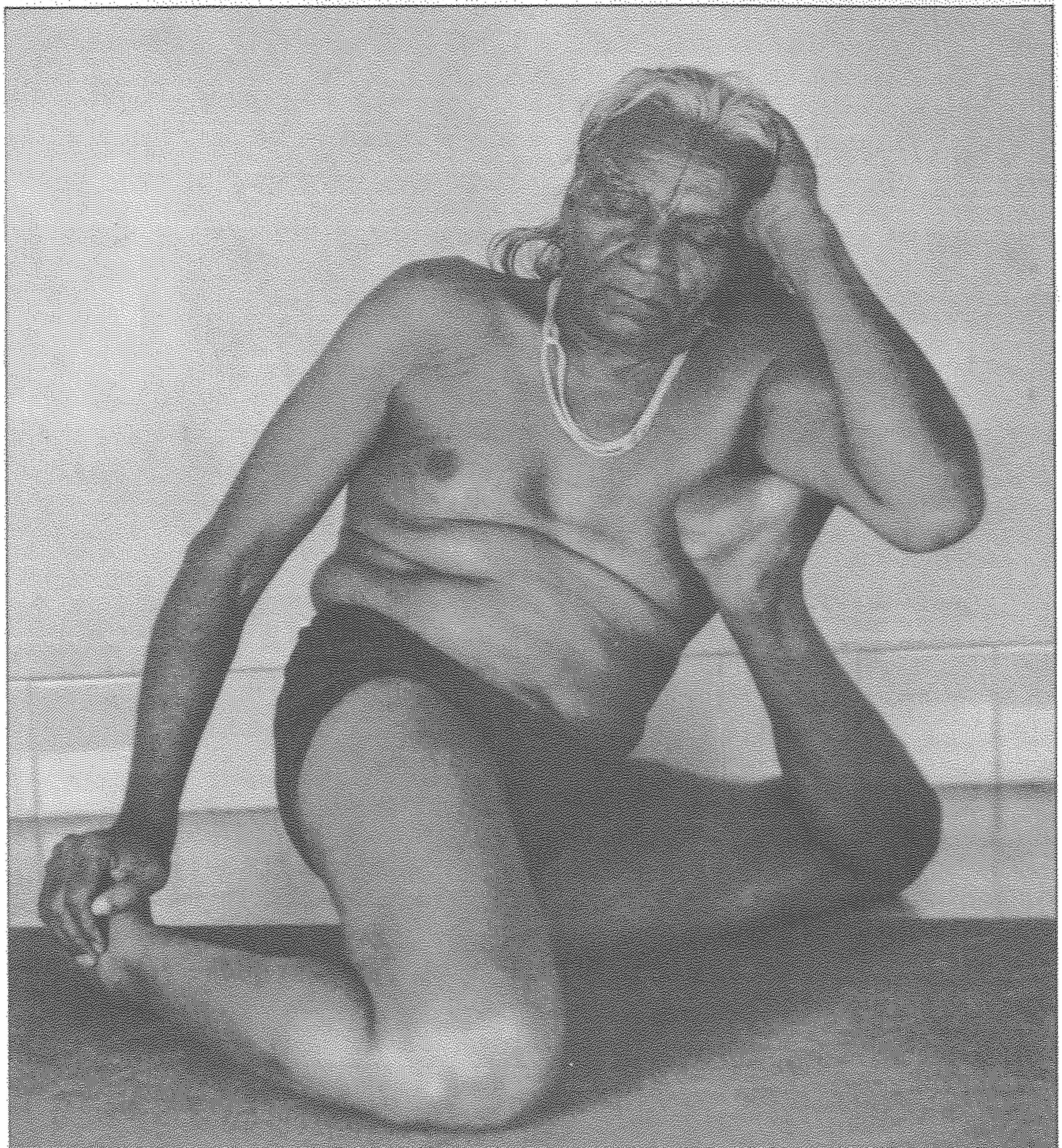
109 Supta Trivikramāsana

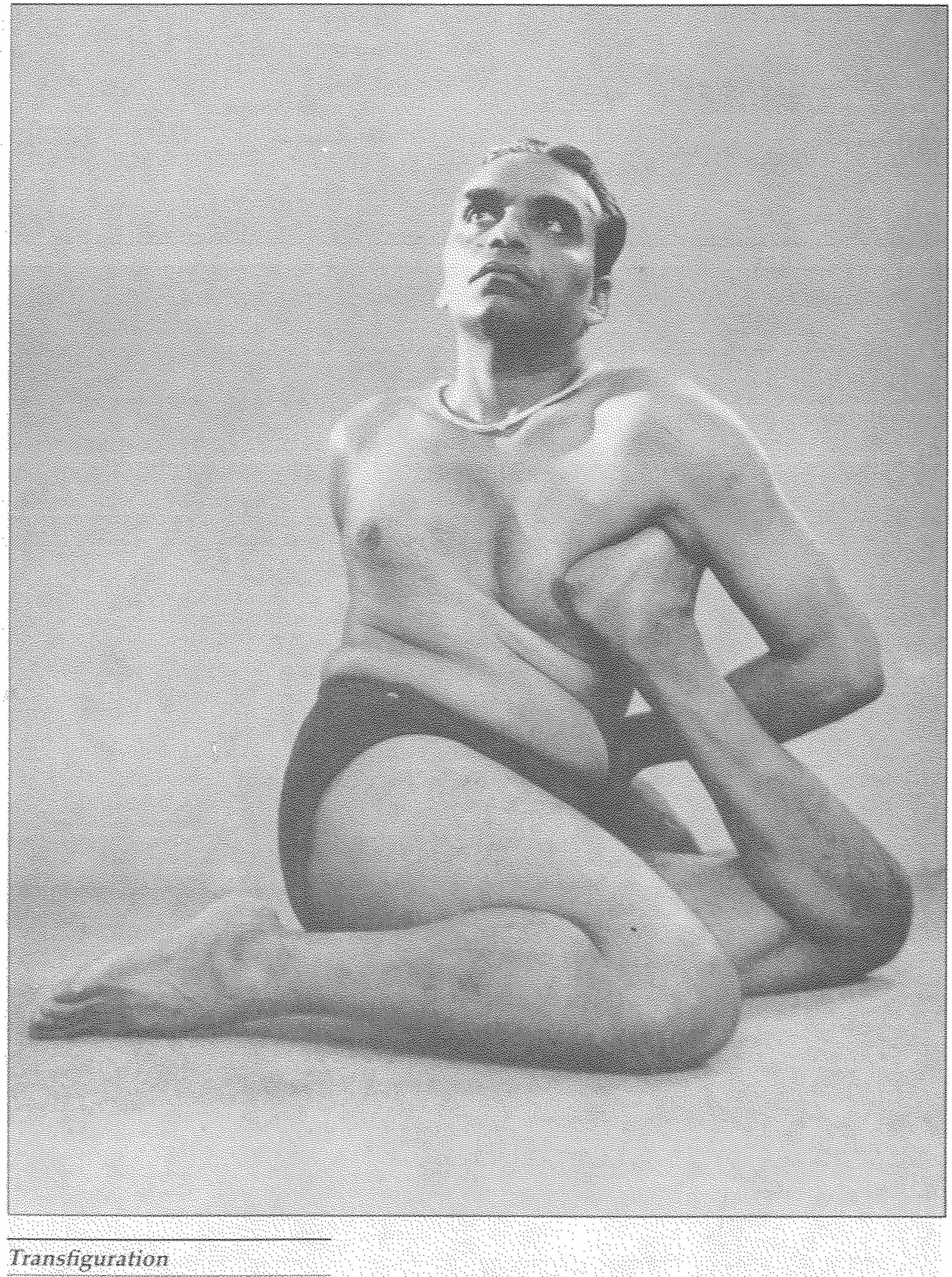
Dreaming or Sleeping?

110 Yogadaṇḍāsana



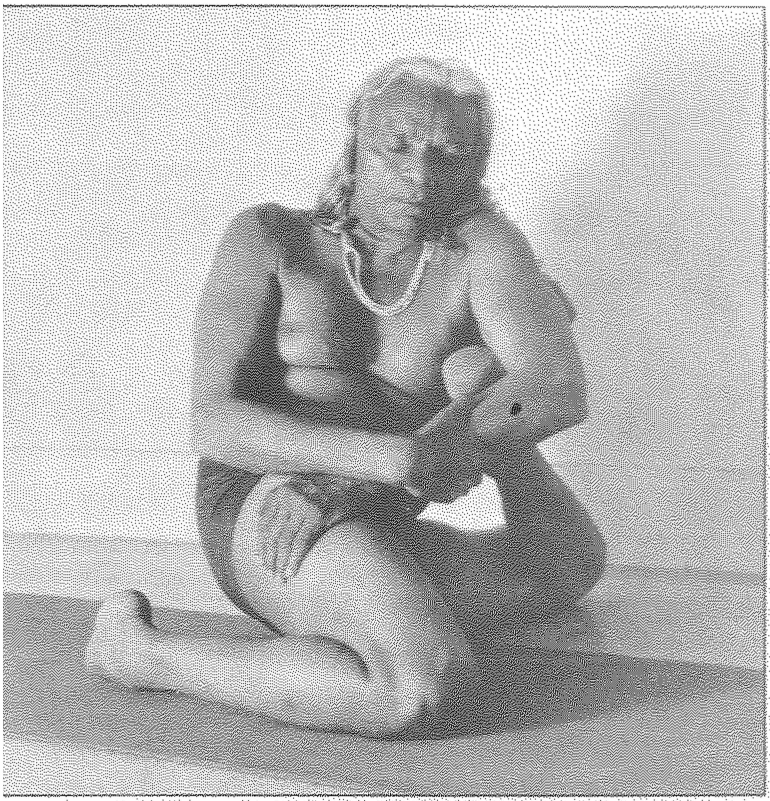






Transfiguration

111 Yogadaṇḍāsana

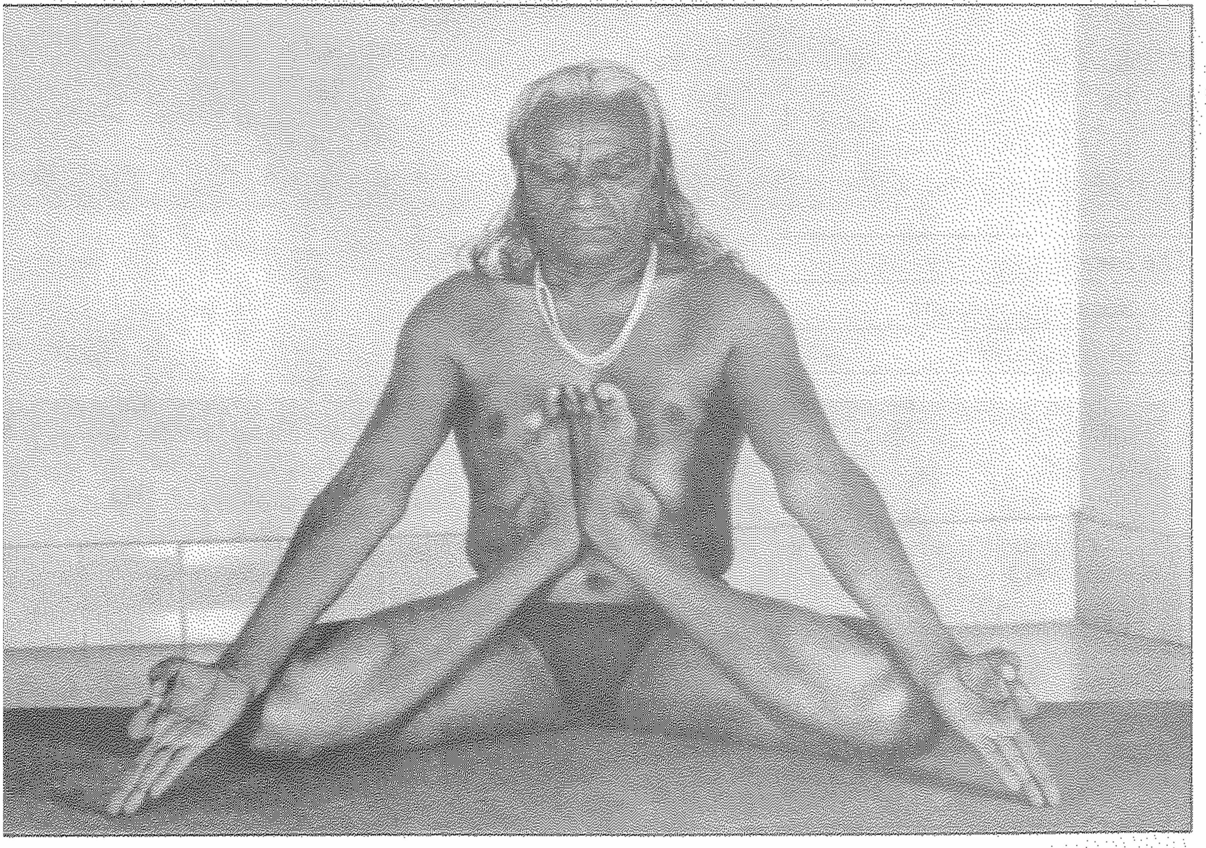


Absorption

112 Yogadaṇḍāsana

Reverence to the Temple of the Soul

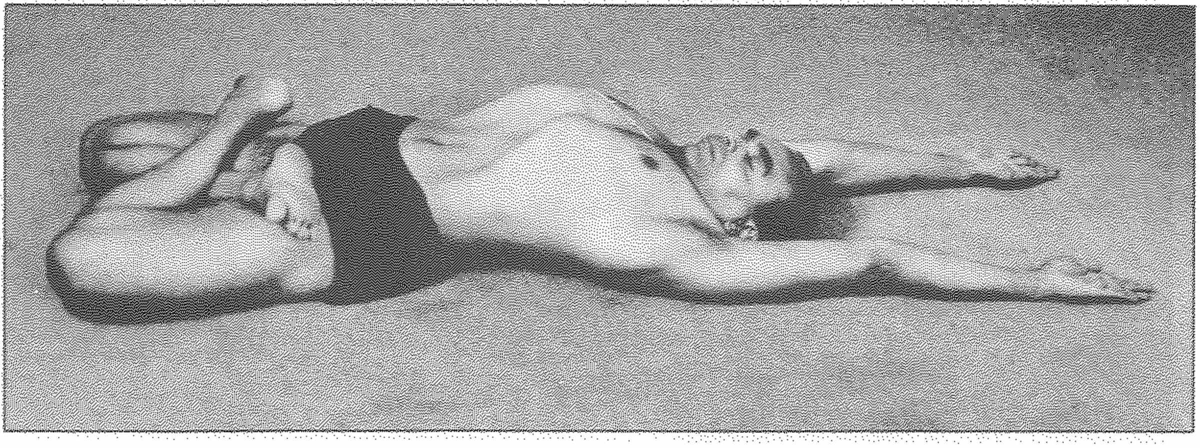
113 Kandāsana

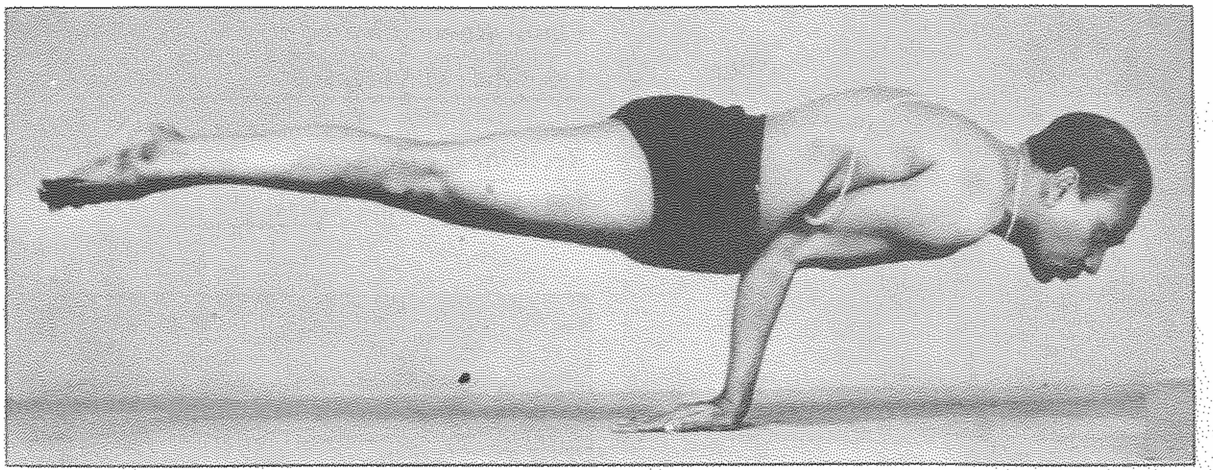


The Siesta

114 Supta Kandāsana

115 Matsyāsana



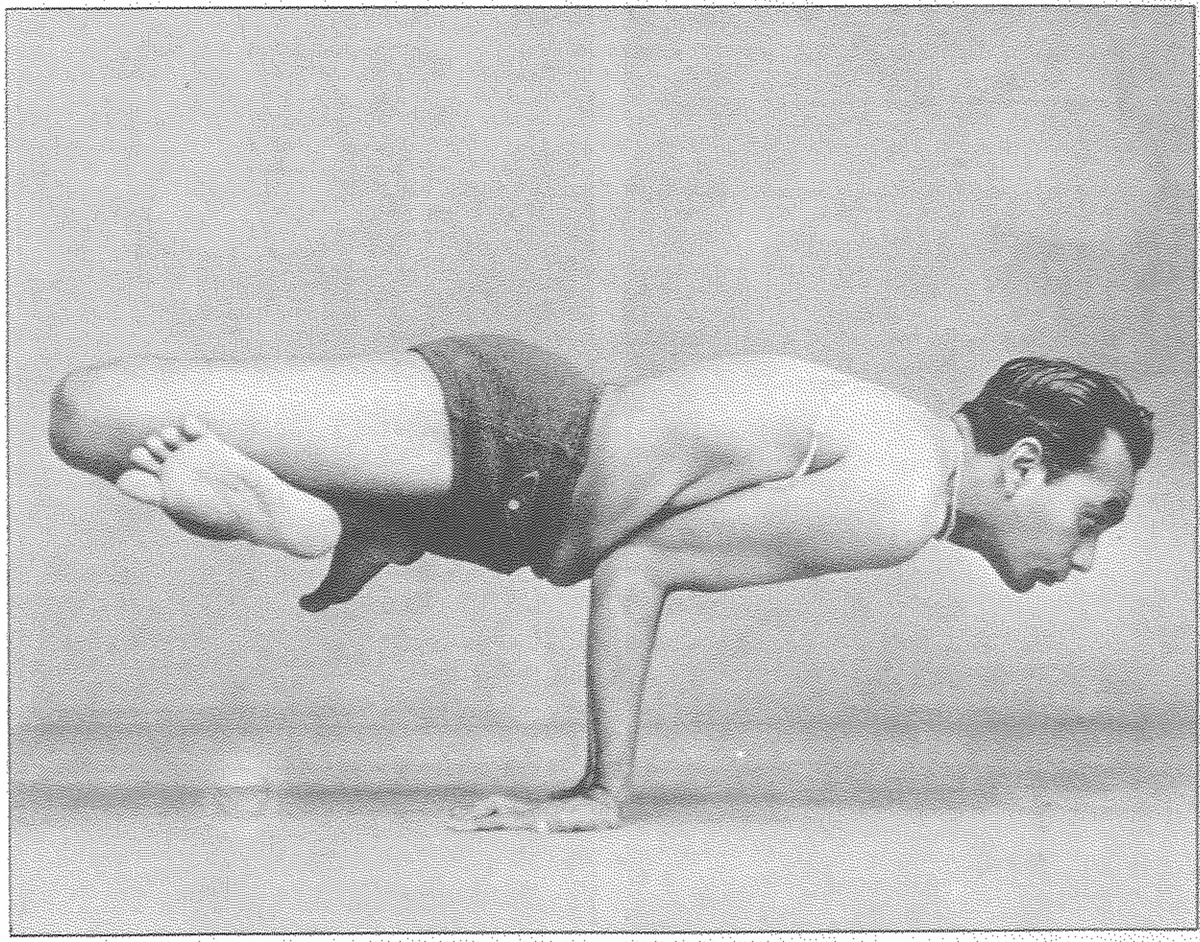


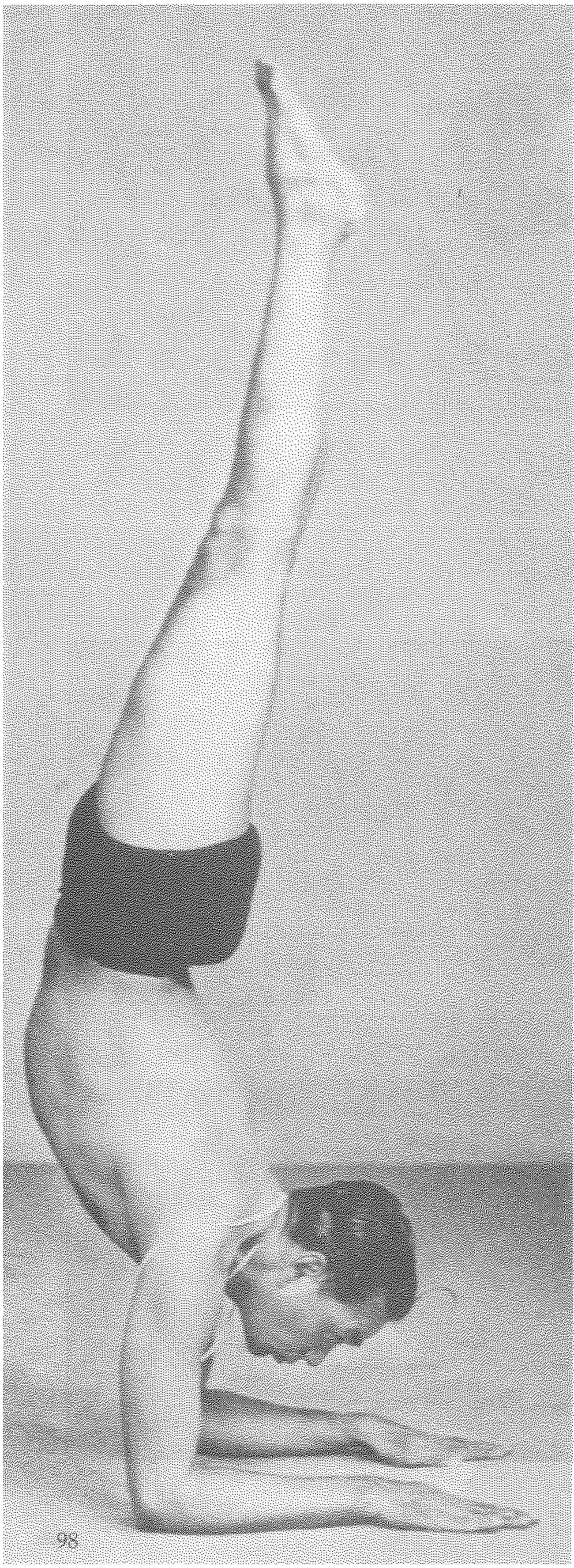
Peacock's Plumes

116 Mayūrāsana

Peacock at Rest

117 Padma Mayūrāsana



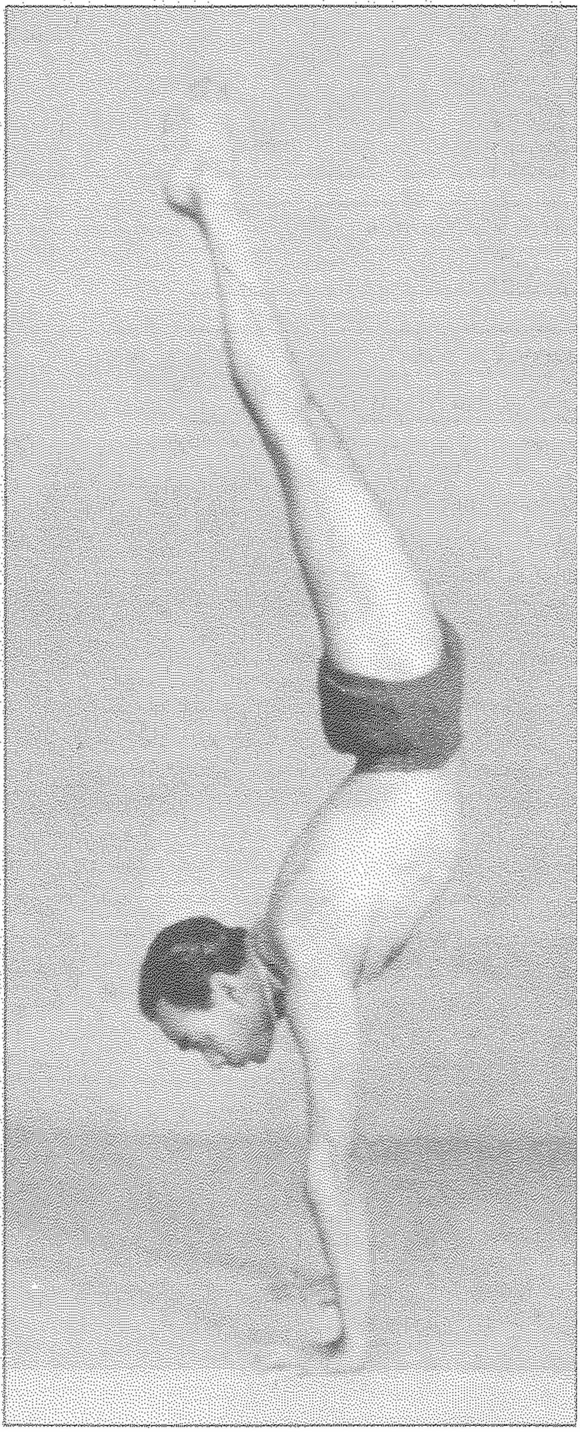


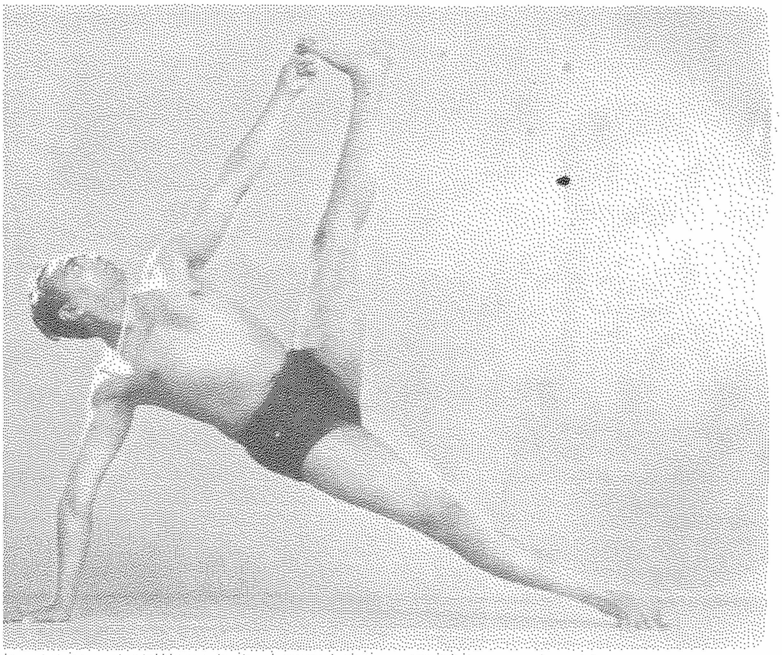
Elbow Room, Please

118 Pinca Mayūrāsana

Rectilineal Extension

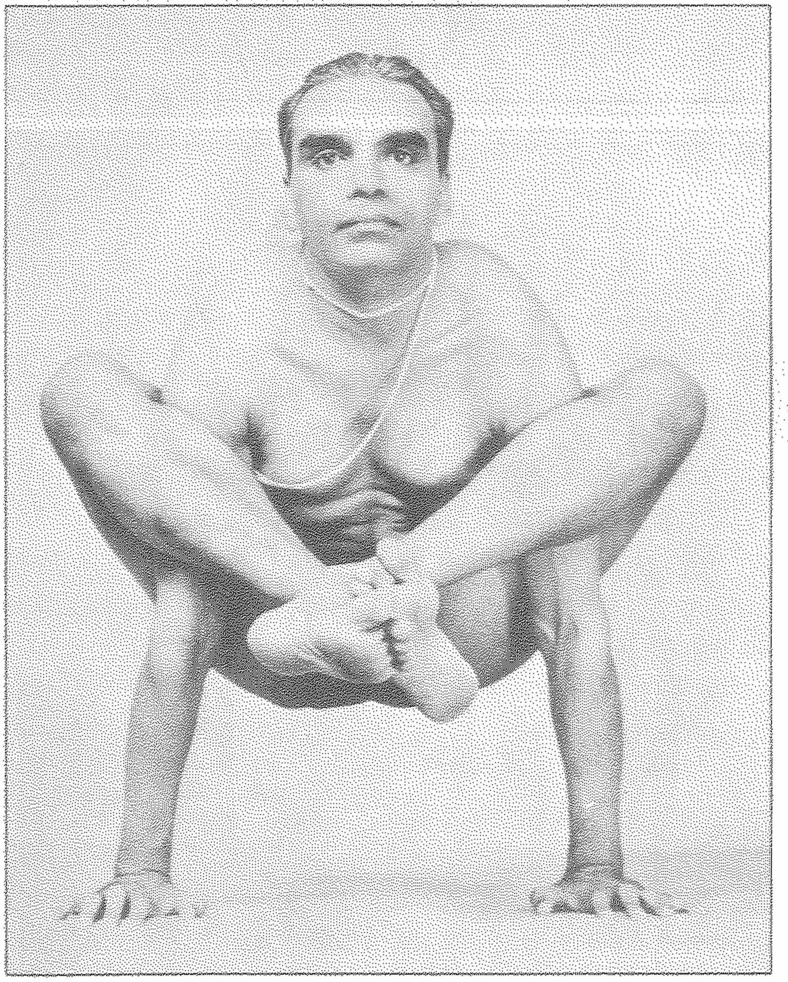
119 Adho Mukha Vṛkṣāsana





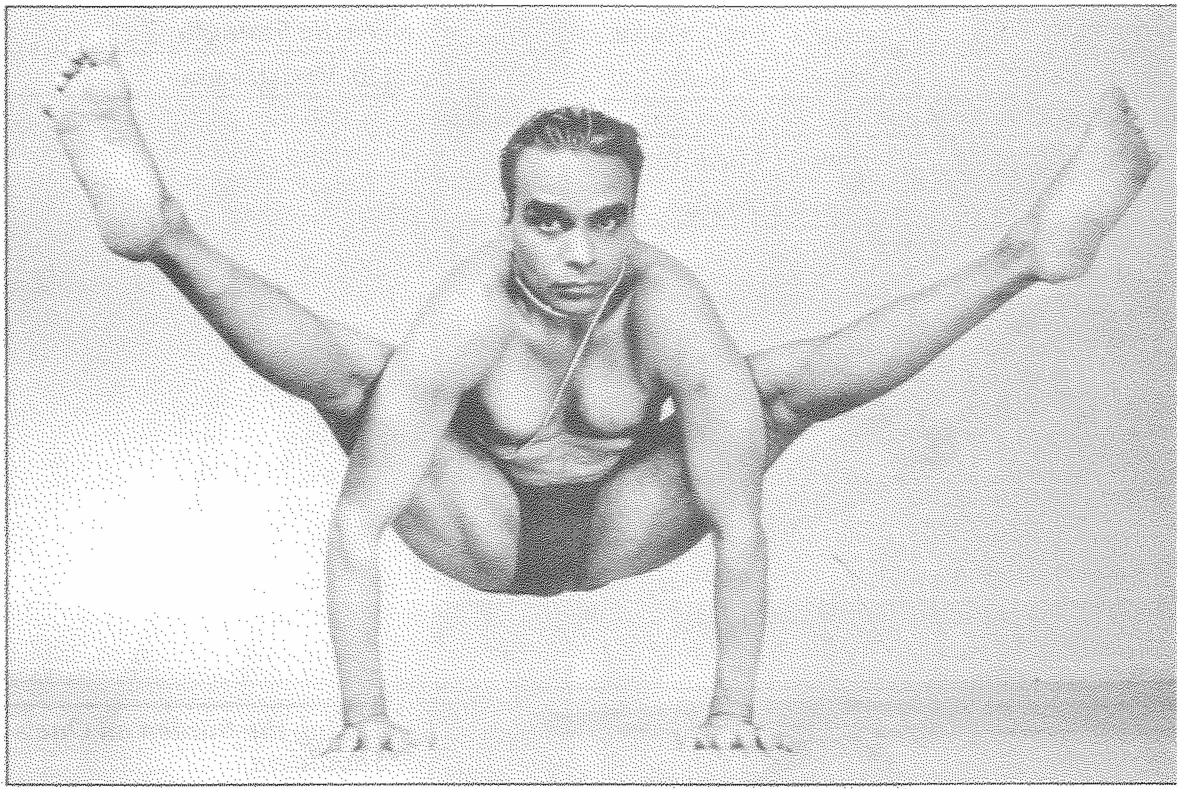
Tensile Strength

120 Vasiṣṭāsana



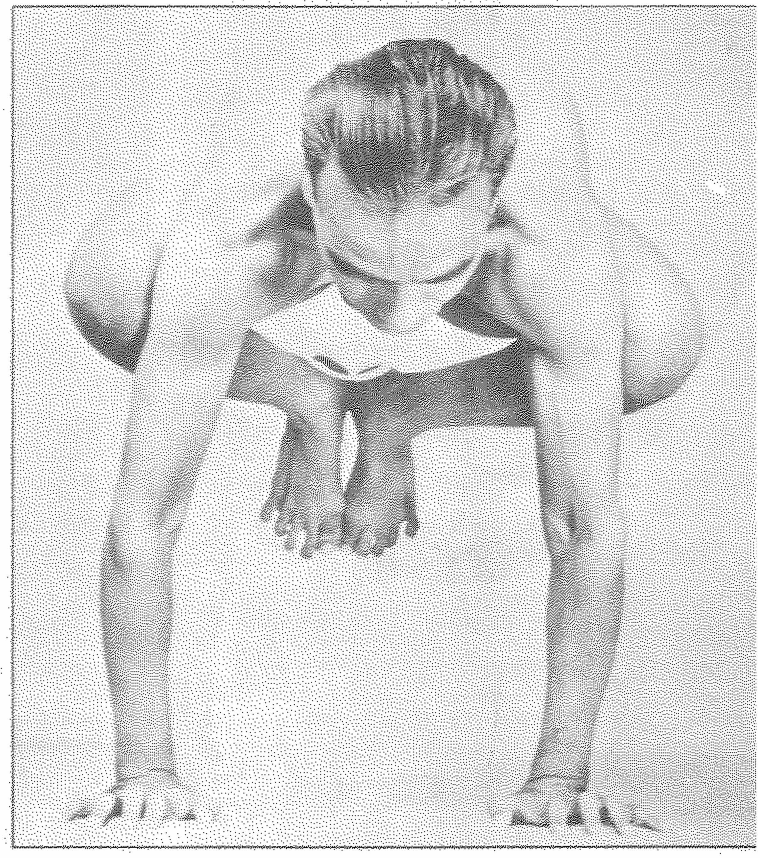
Taking the Burden on One's Shoulders

121 Bhujapīḍāsana



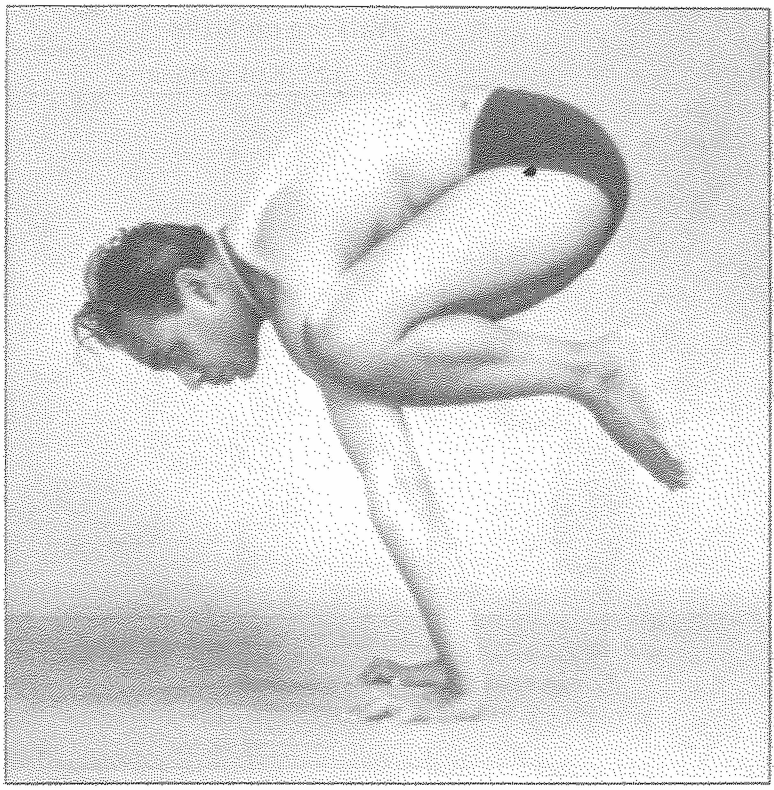
Aerobatics

122 Tittibhāsana



Flight

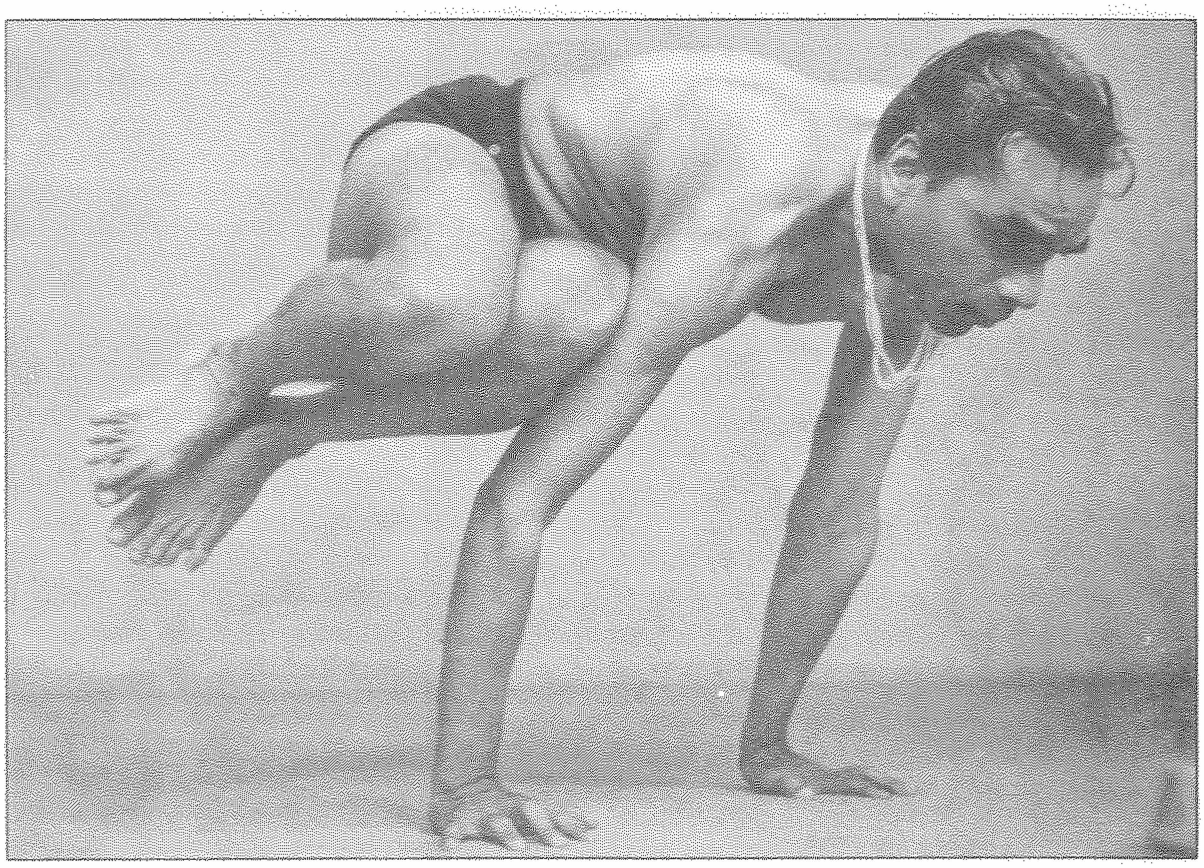
123 Bakāsana

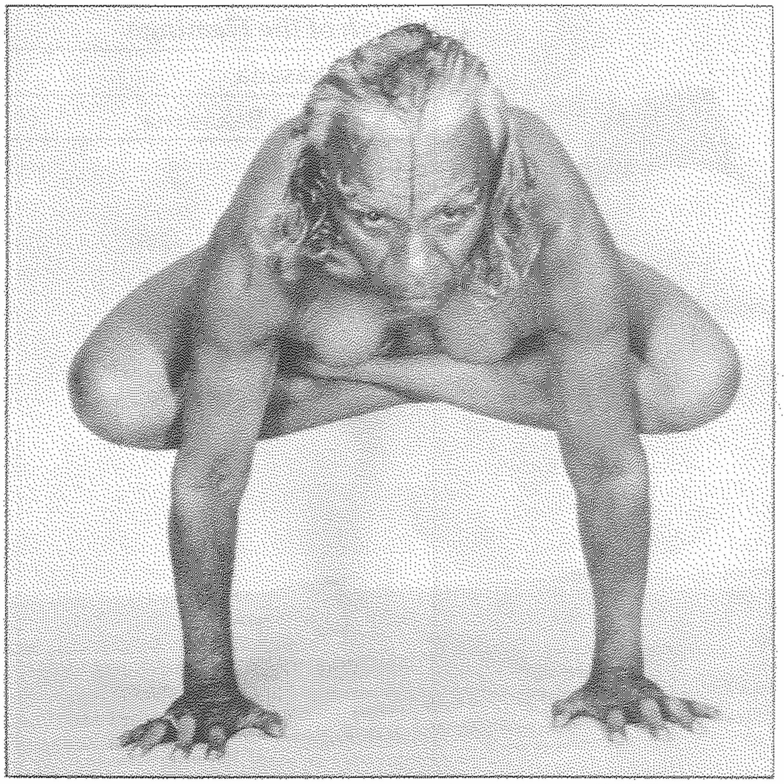


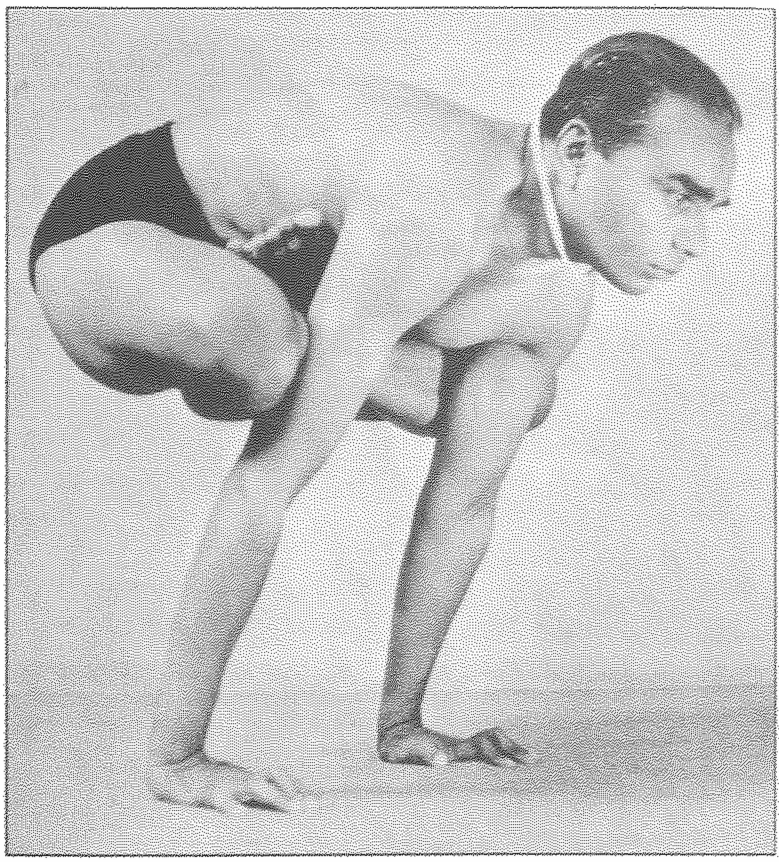
Perch of the Flamingo

124 Bakāsana

125 Pārśva Bakāsana

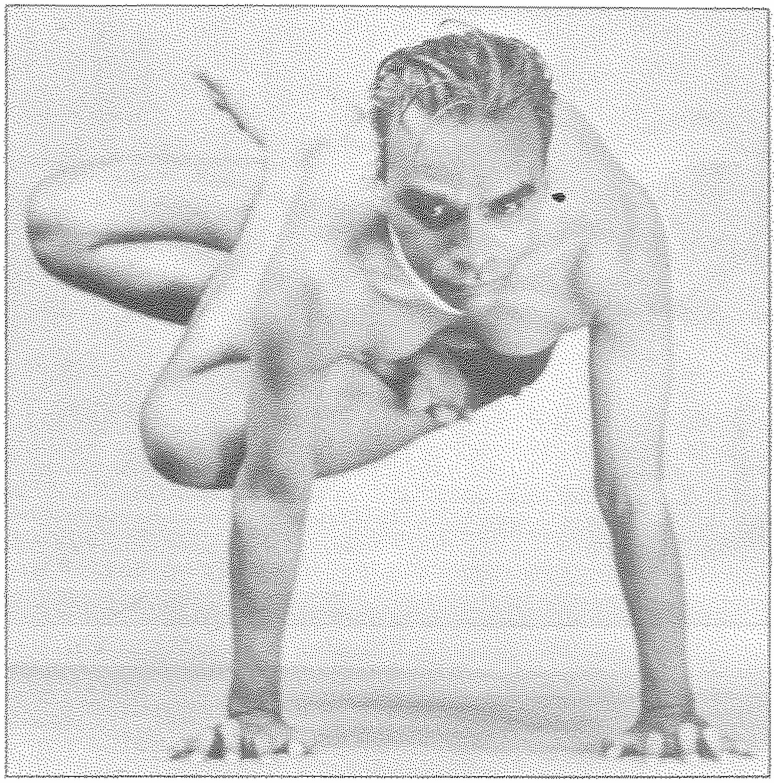






Walking on Stilts

126, 127 Kukkuṭāsana

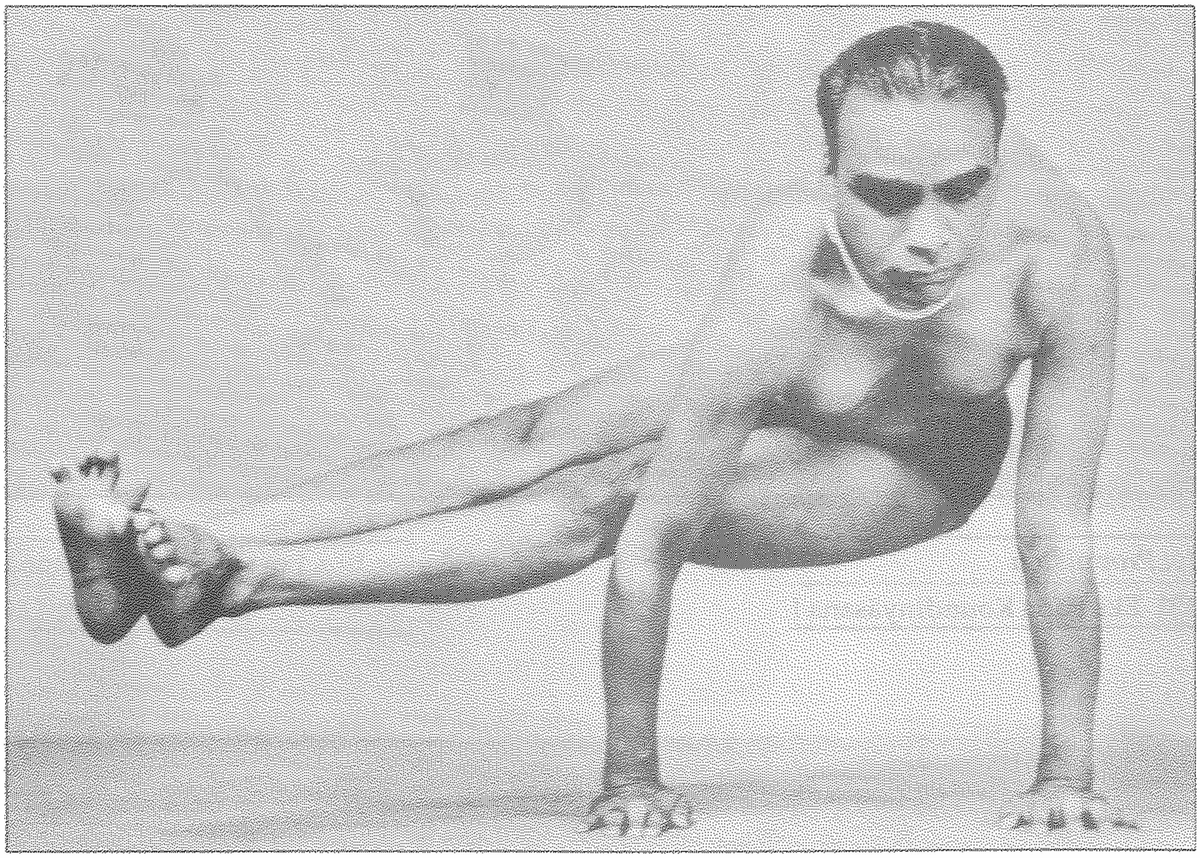


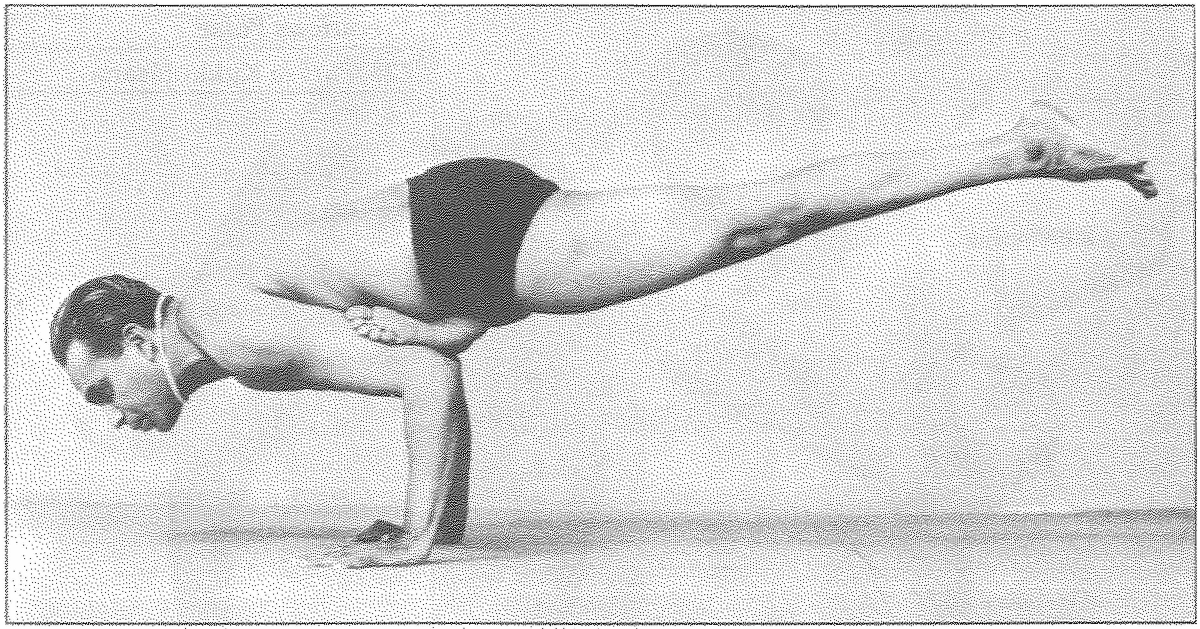
Precarious Poise

128 Pārśva Kukkuṭāsana

Unconcerned

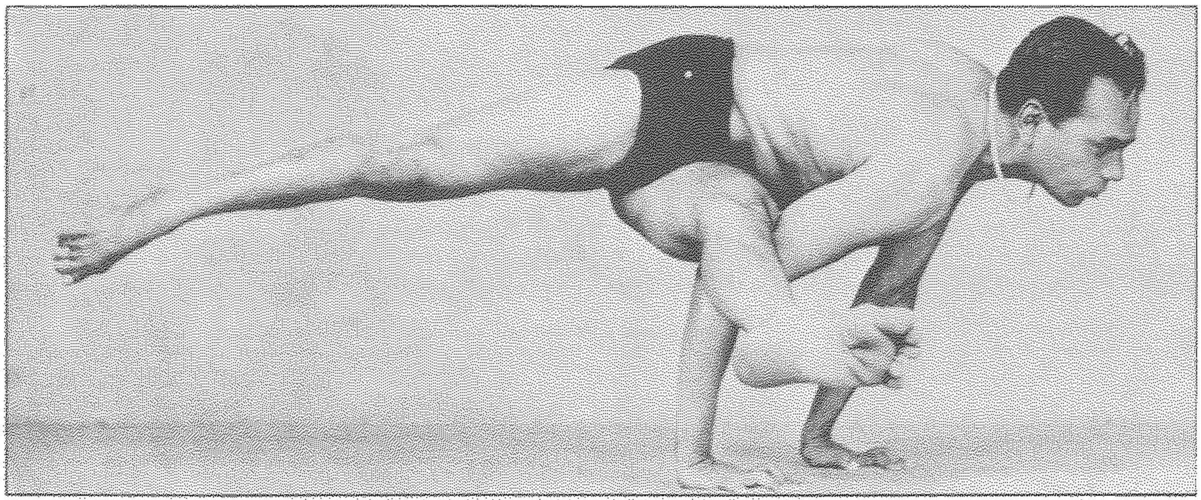
129 Dvi Pāda Kouṇḍinyāsana





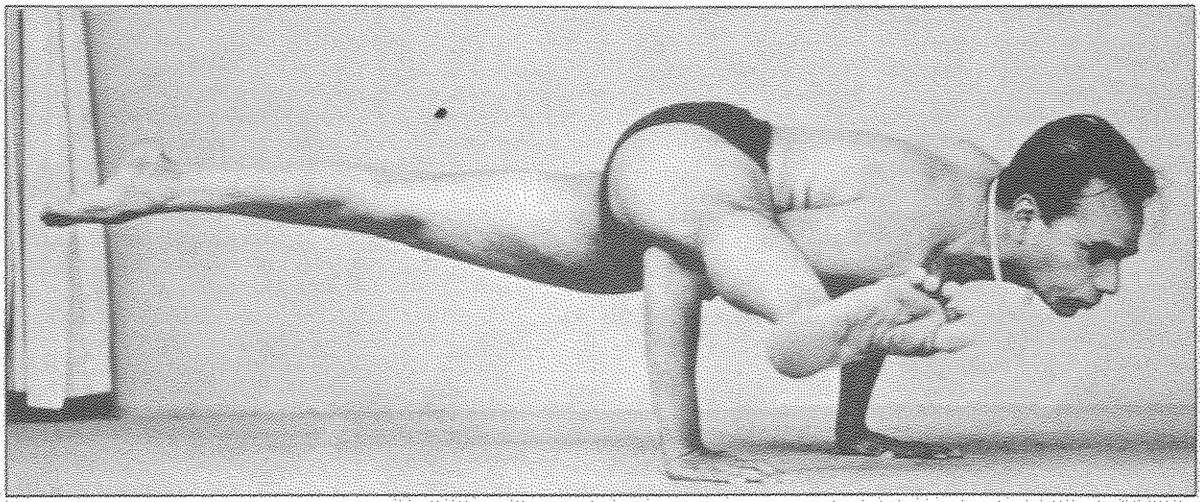
The Glider

130 Eka Pāda Gālavāsana



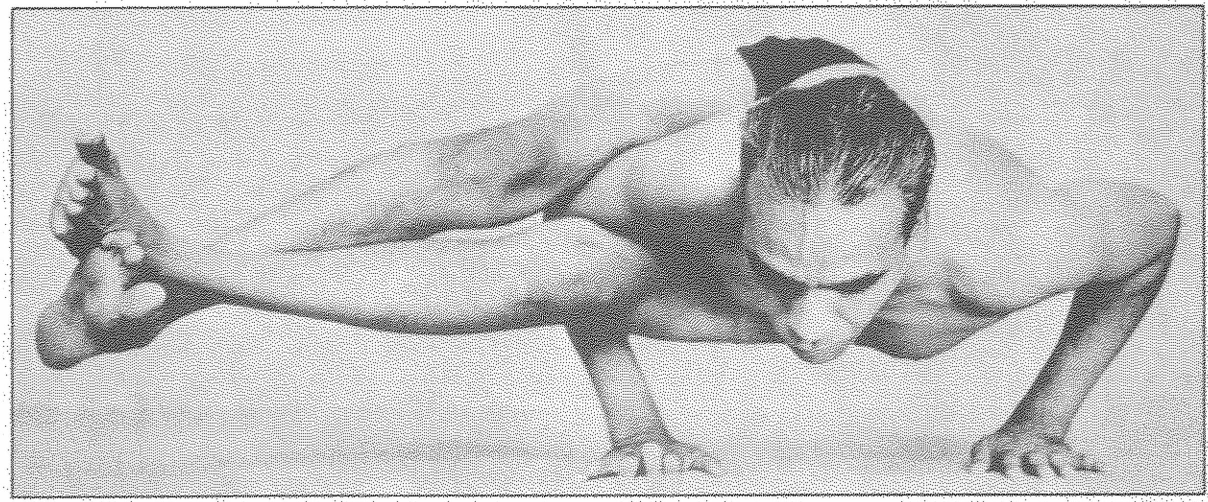
Jet Propulsion

131 Eka Pāda Kouṇḍinyāsana I



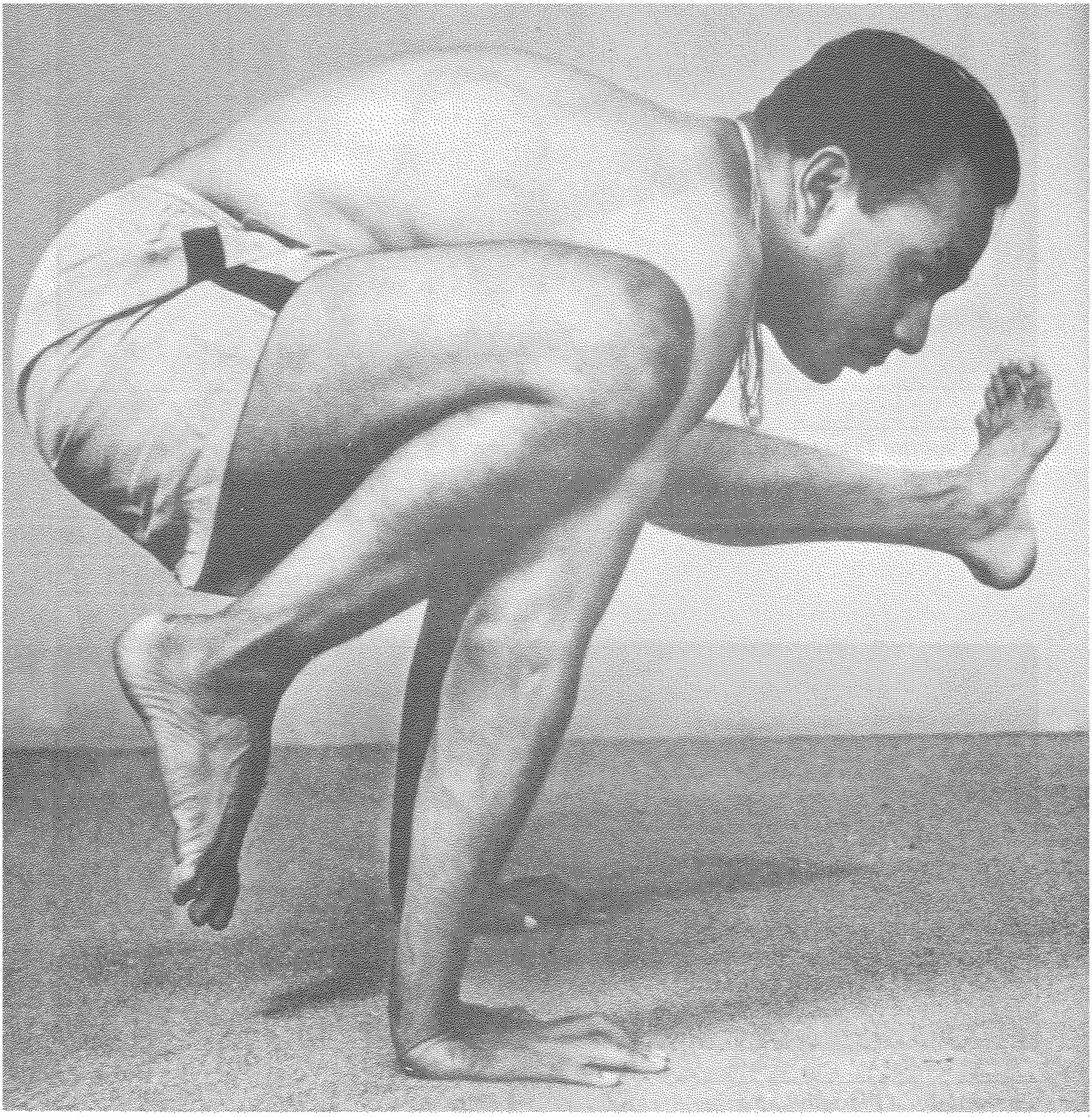
All Set for the Take-off

132 Eka Pāda Kouṇḍinyāsana II



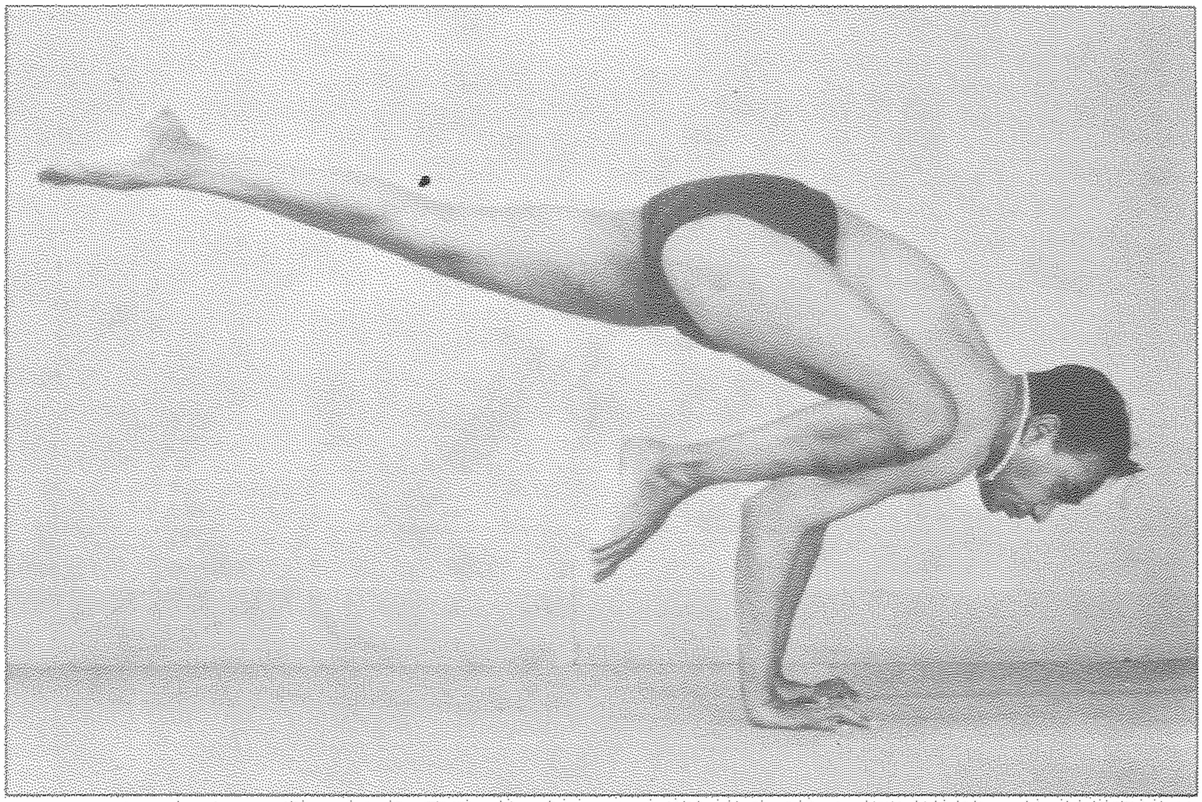
Looking for a Place to Land

133 Aṣṭāvakrāsana



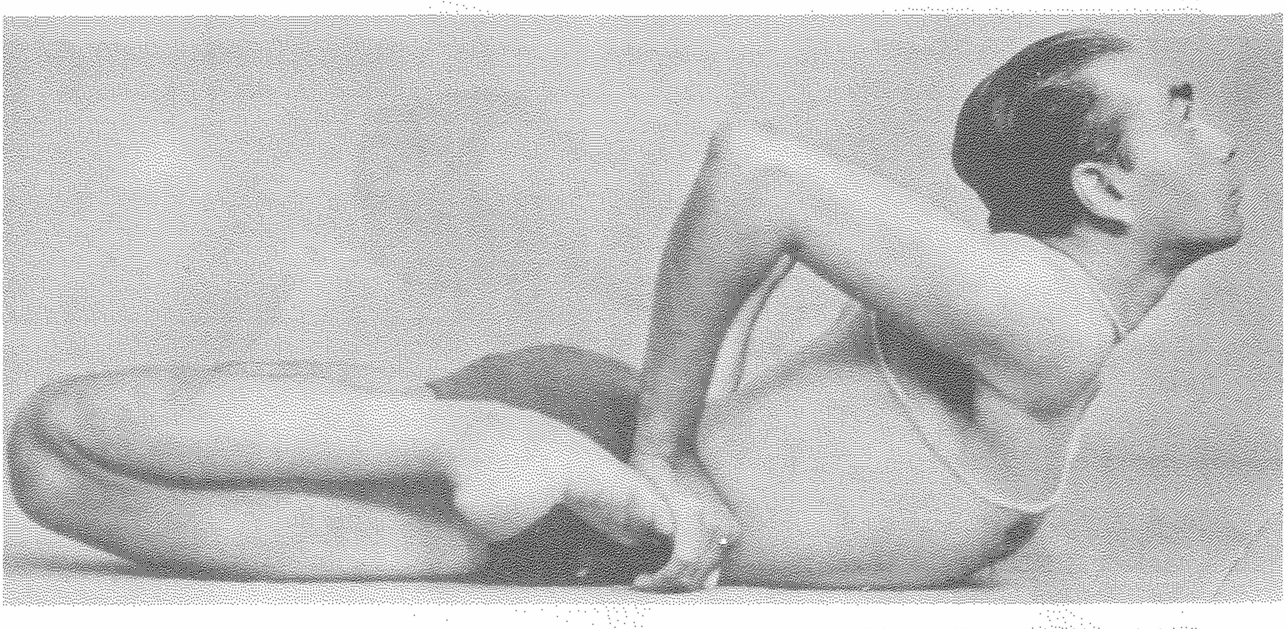
Perfect Landing

134 Eka Pāda Bakāsana



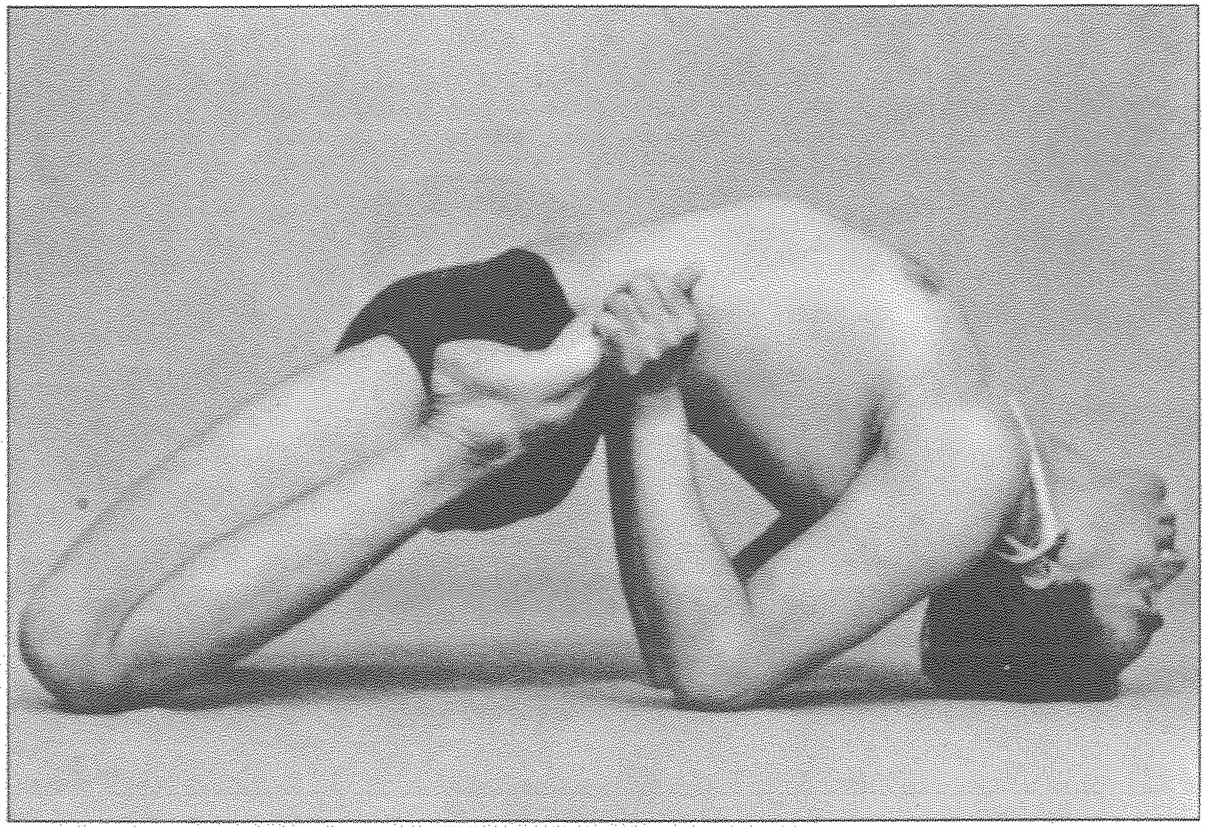
Diving

135 Eka Pāda Bakāsana



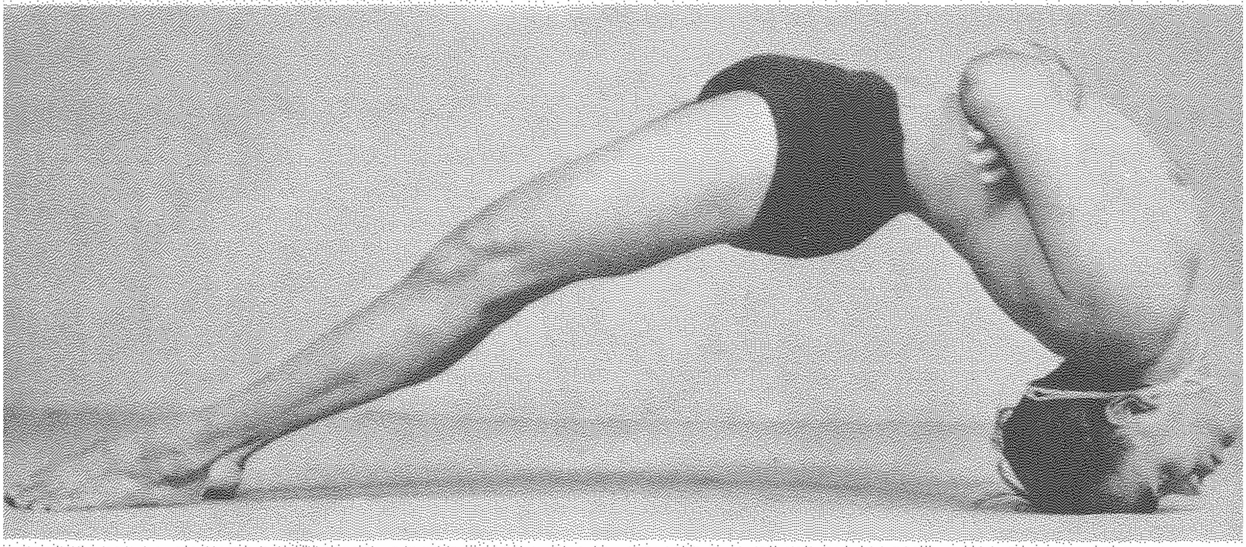
Ready for a Leap

136 Bhekāsana



Frog's Somersault

137 Uttāna Bhekāsana

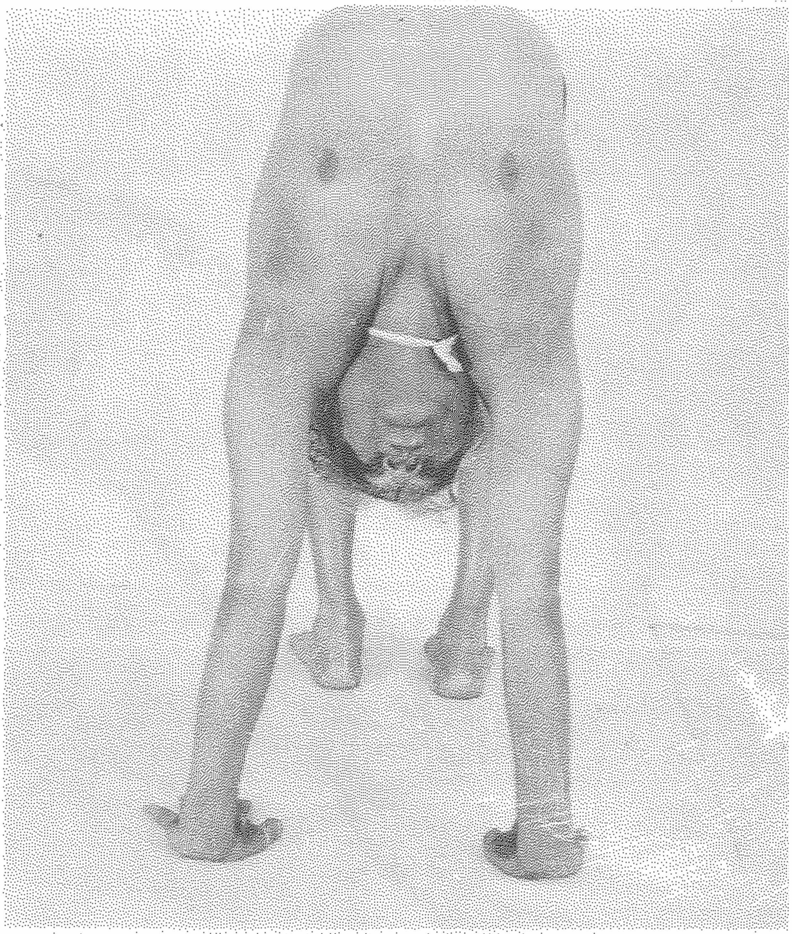


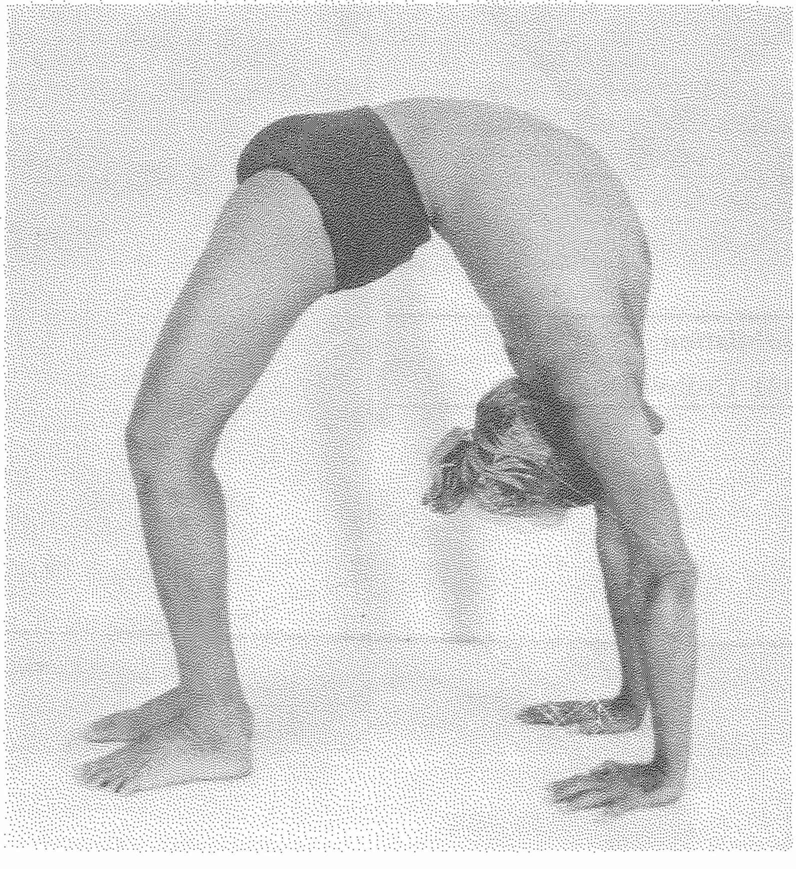
Bridging the Polarities of Man

138 Setu Bandhāsana

Peeping through the Telescope

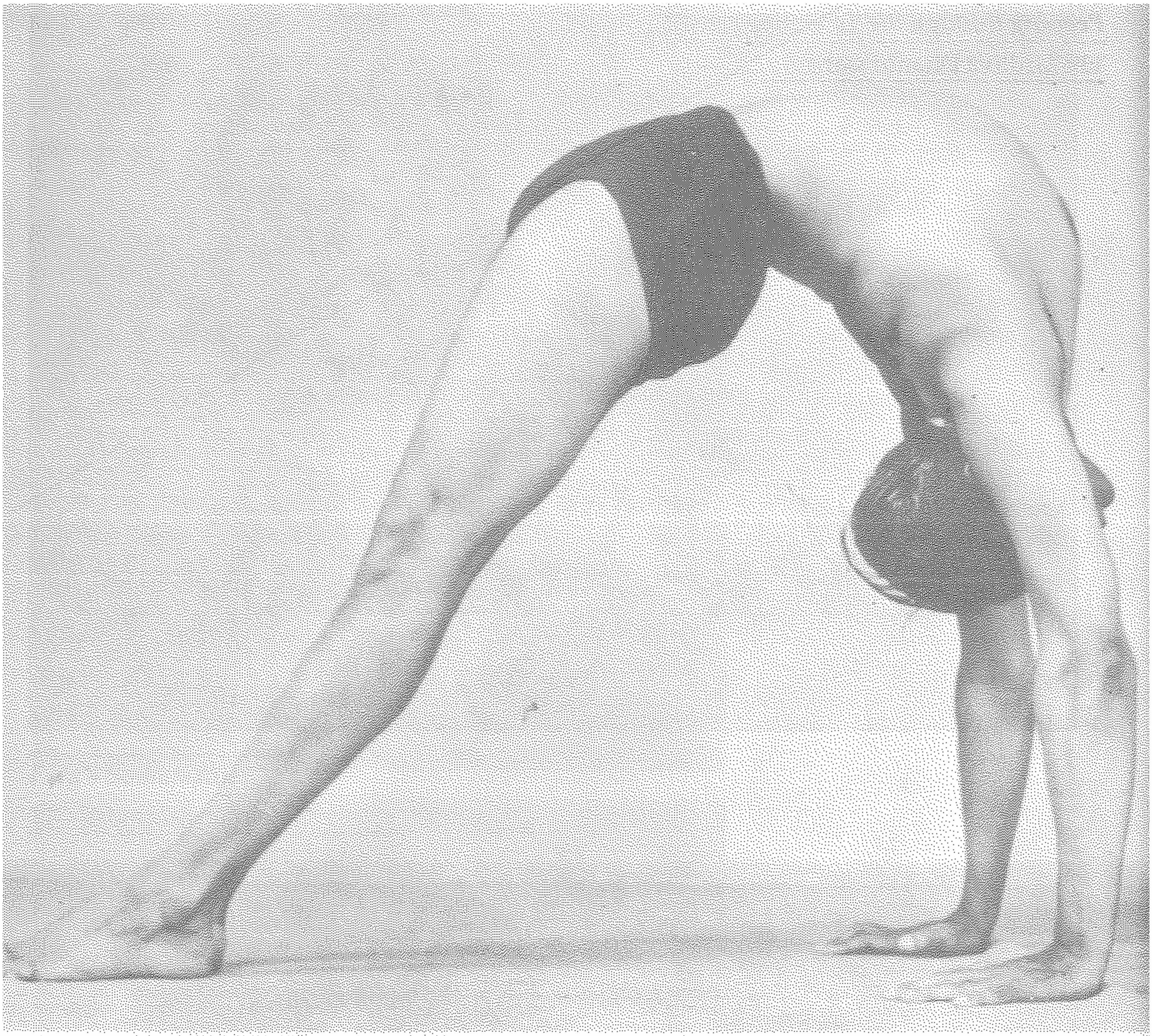
139 Ūrdhva Dhanurāsana





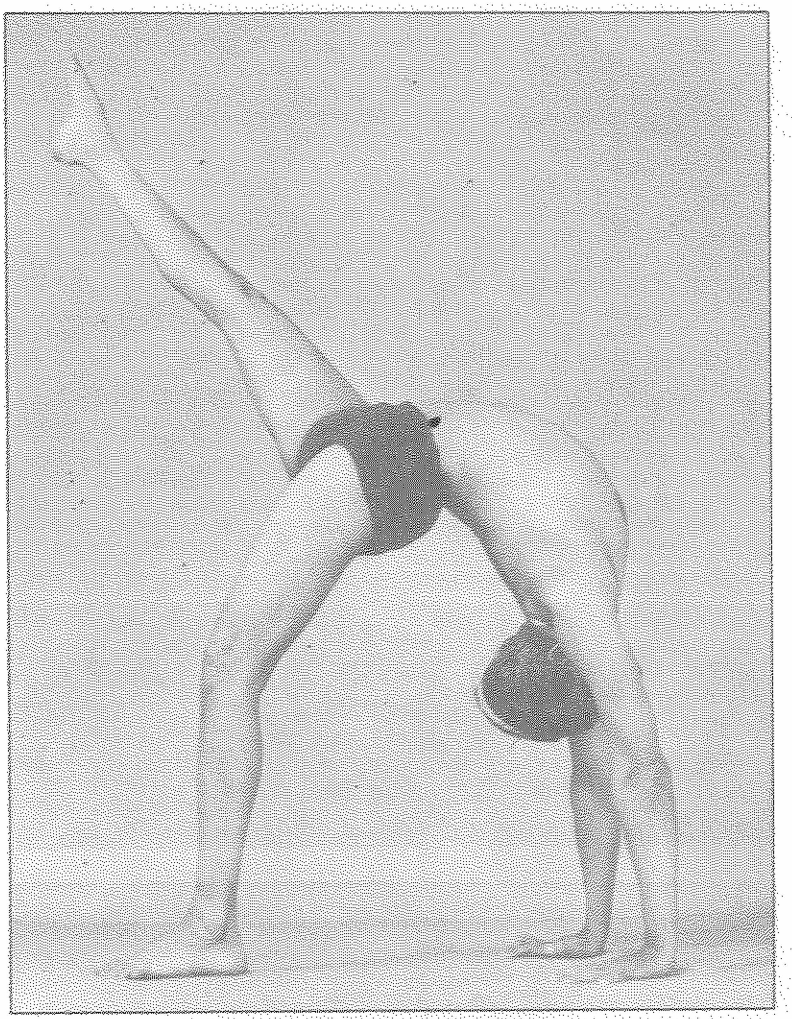
Arcade

140 Ūrdhva Dhanurāsana



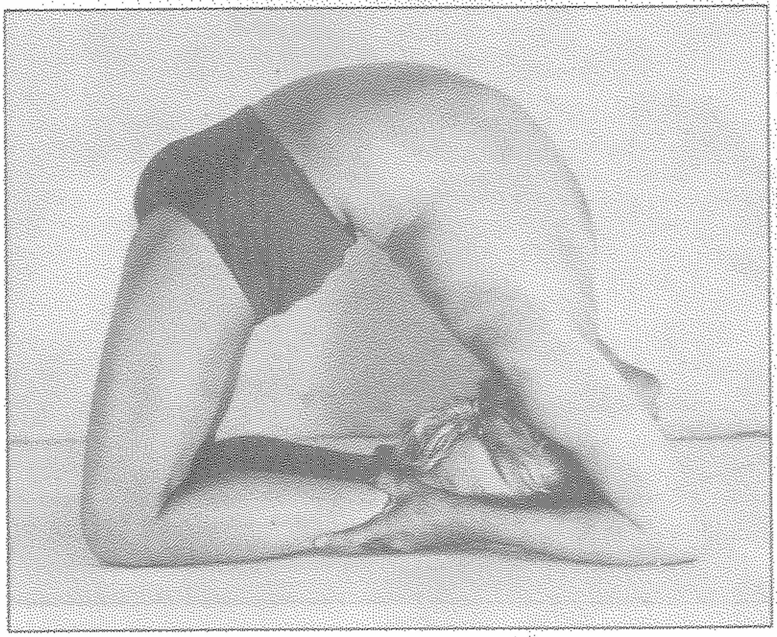
Jubilation

141 Ūrdhva Dhanurāsana



Elephant's Salute

142 Eka Pāda Ūrdhva Dhanurāsana

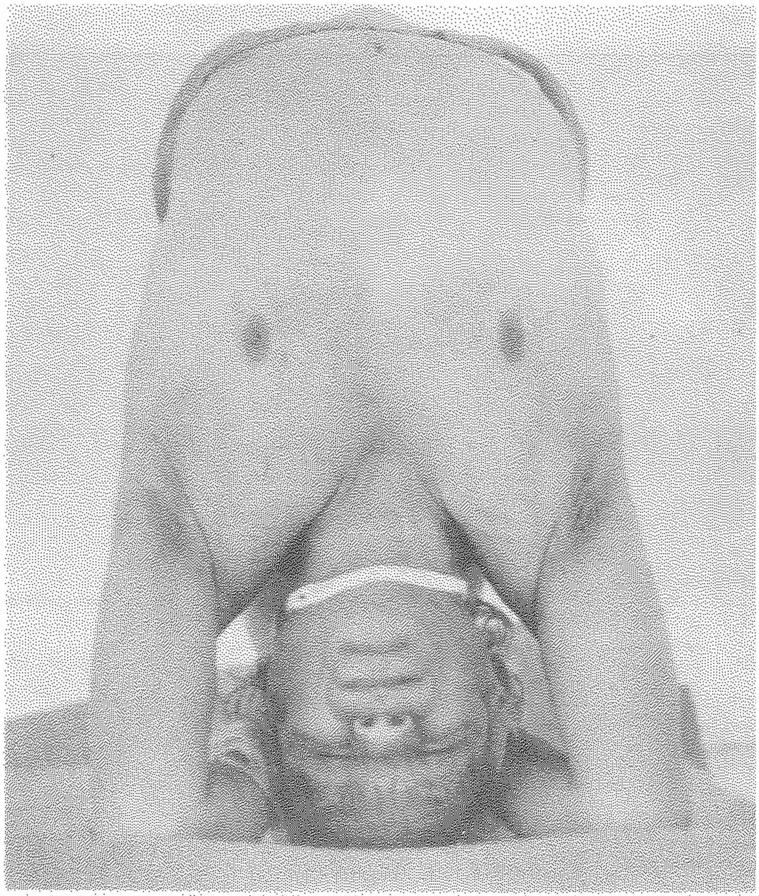


Friendliness

143 Kapotāsana

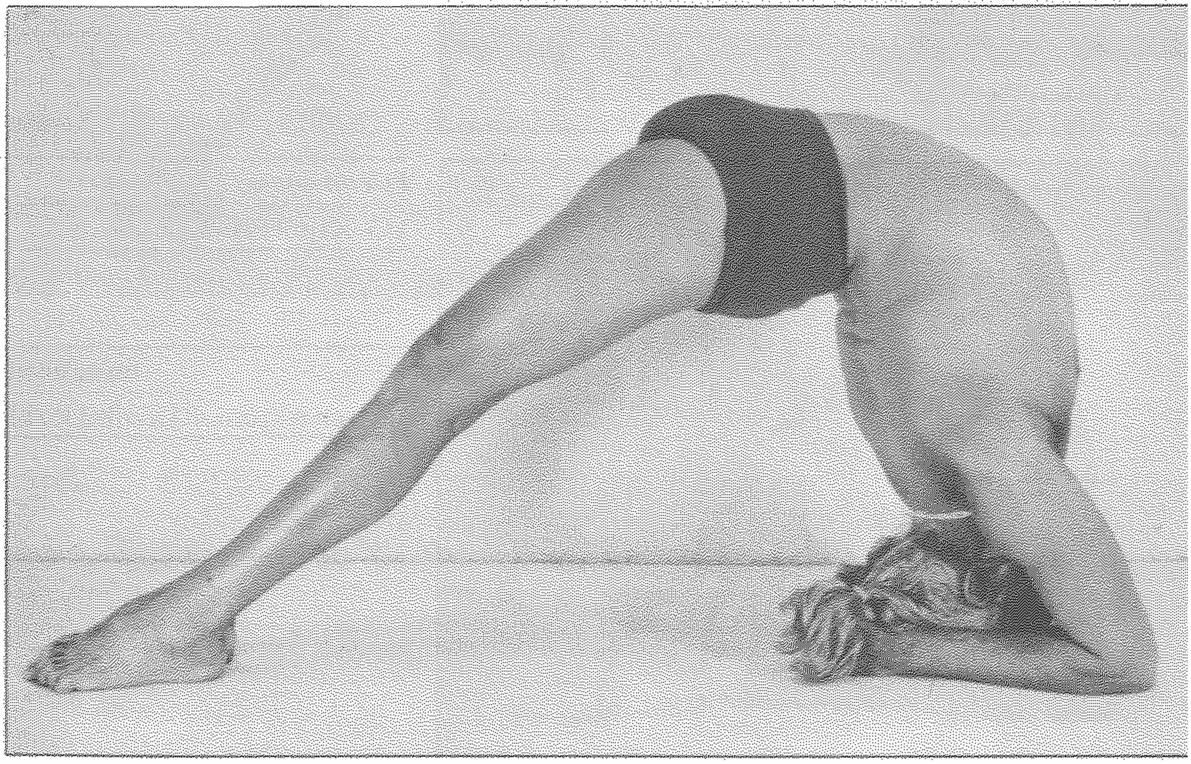
Solemnity

144 Dvi Pāda Viparīta Daṇḍāsana

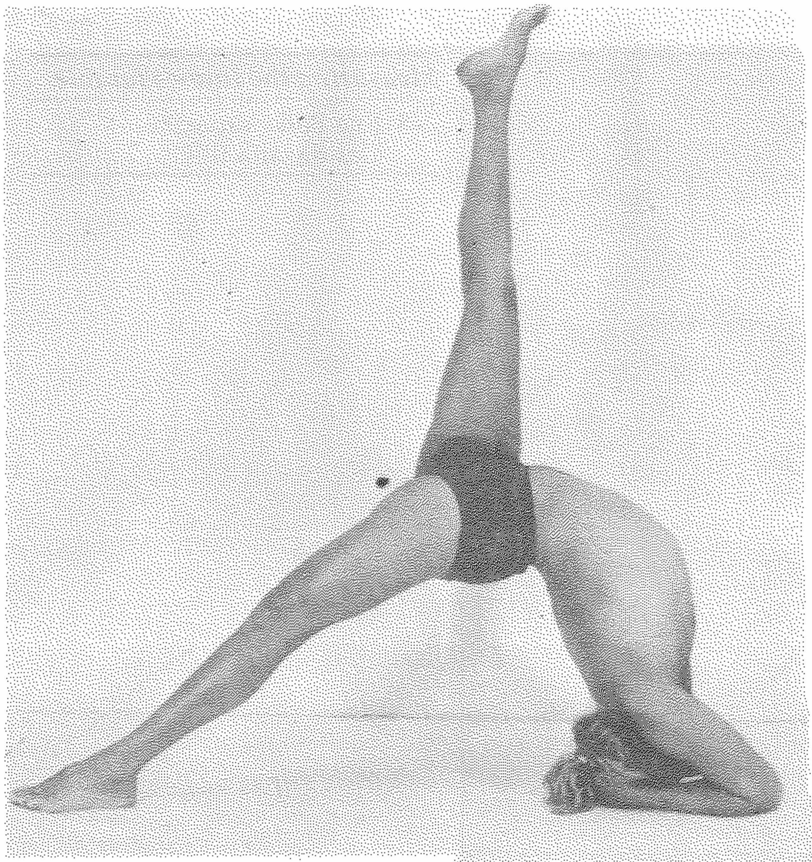


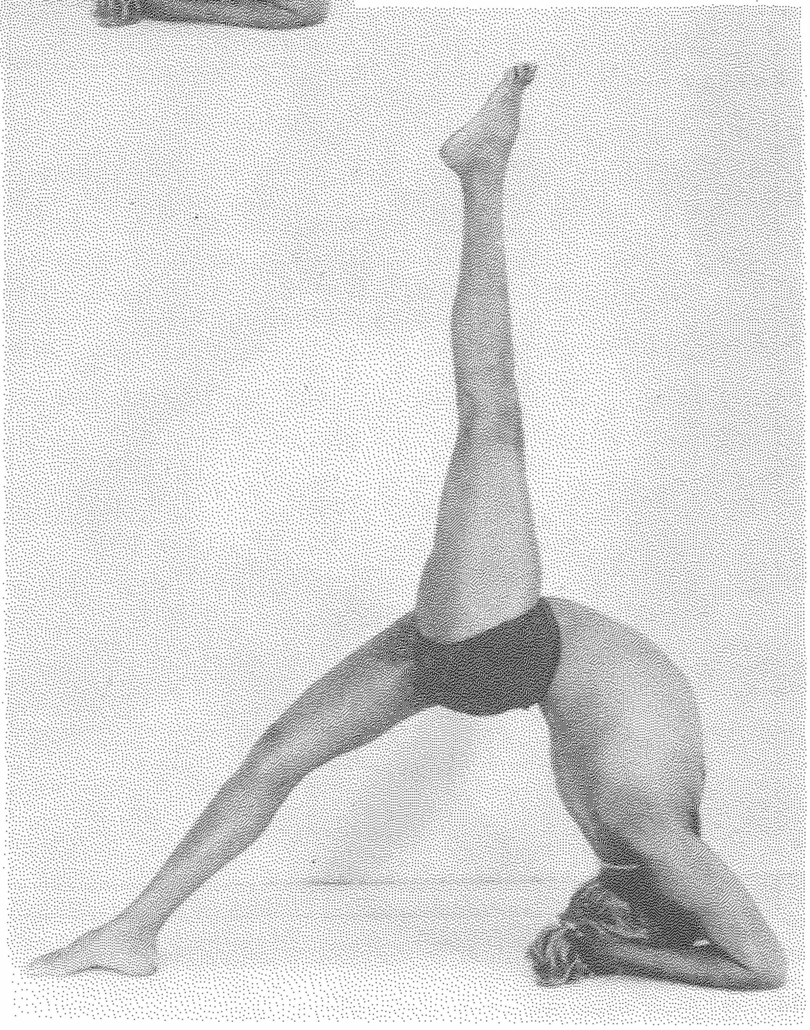
Alert Repose

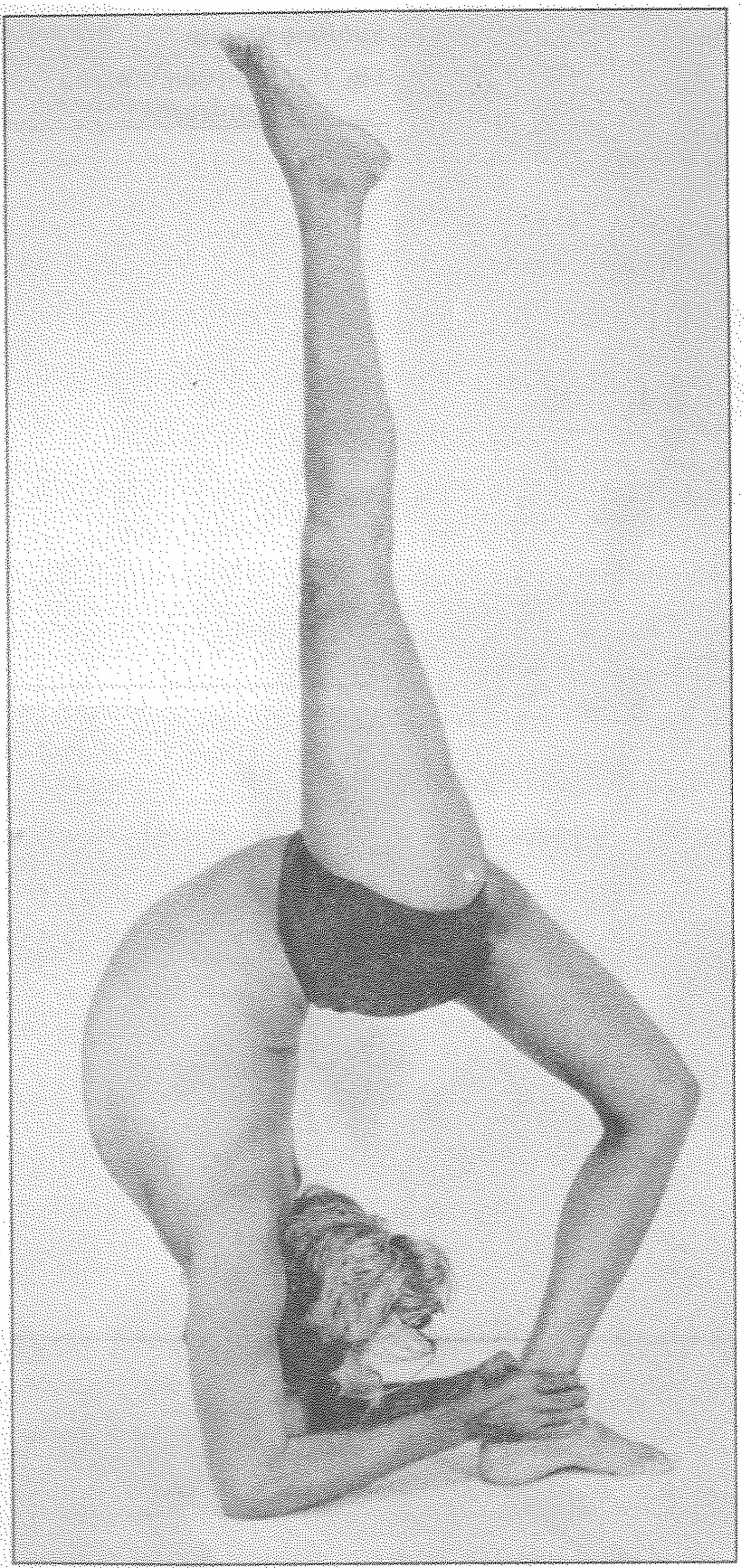
145 Dvi Pāda Viparīta Daṇḍāsana



146, 147 Eka Pāda Viparīta Daṇḍāsana I





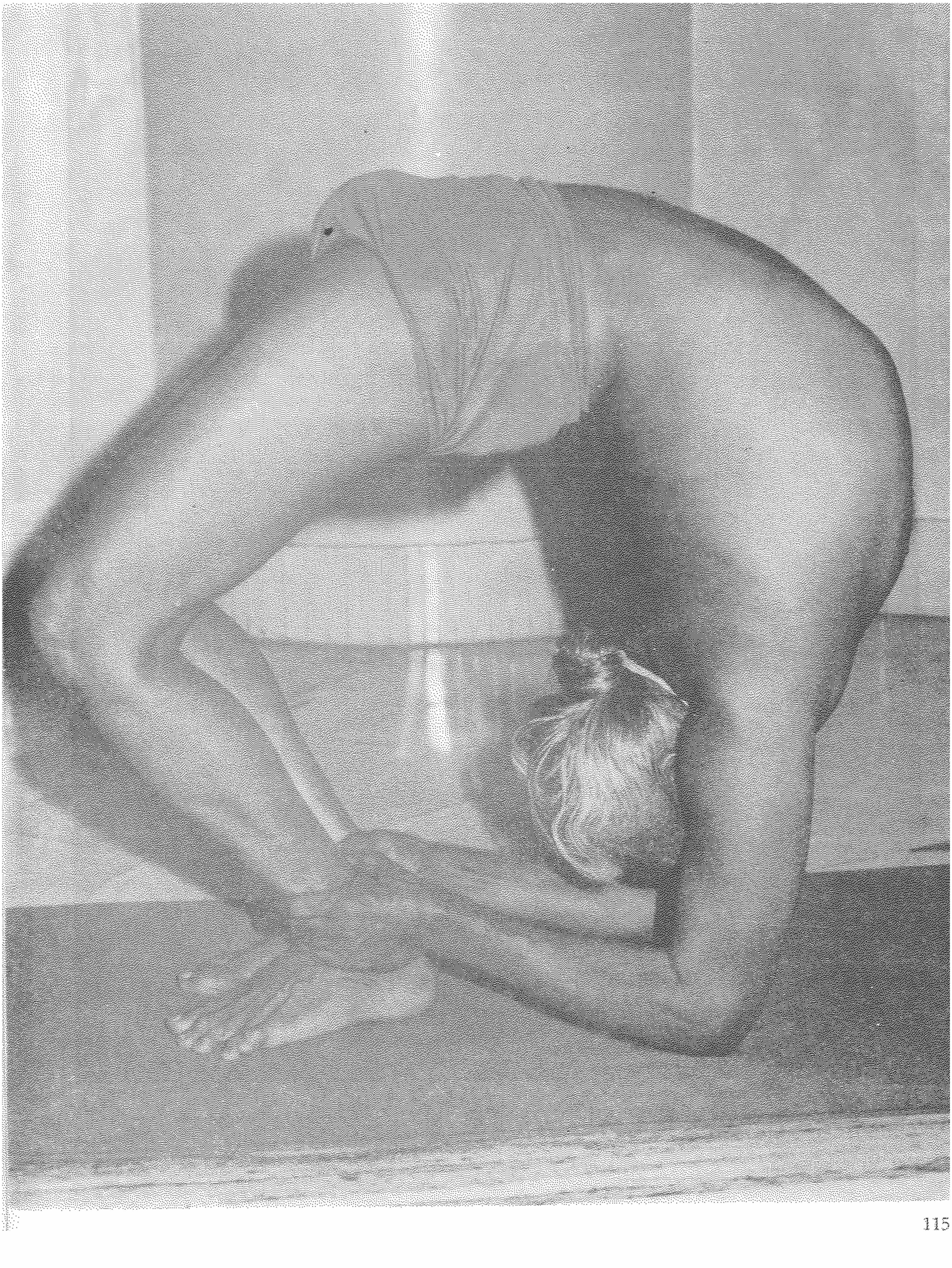


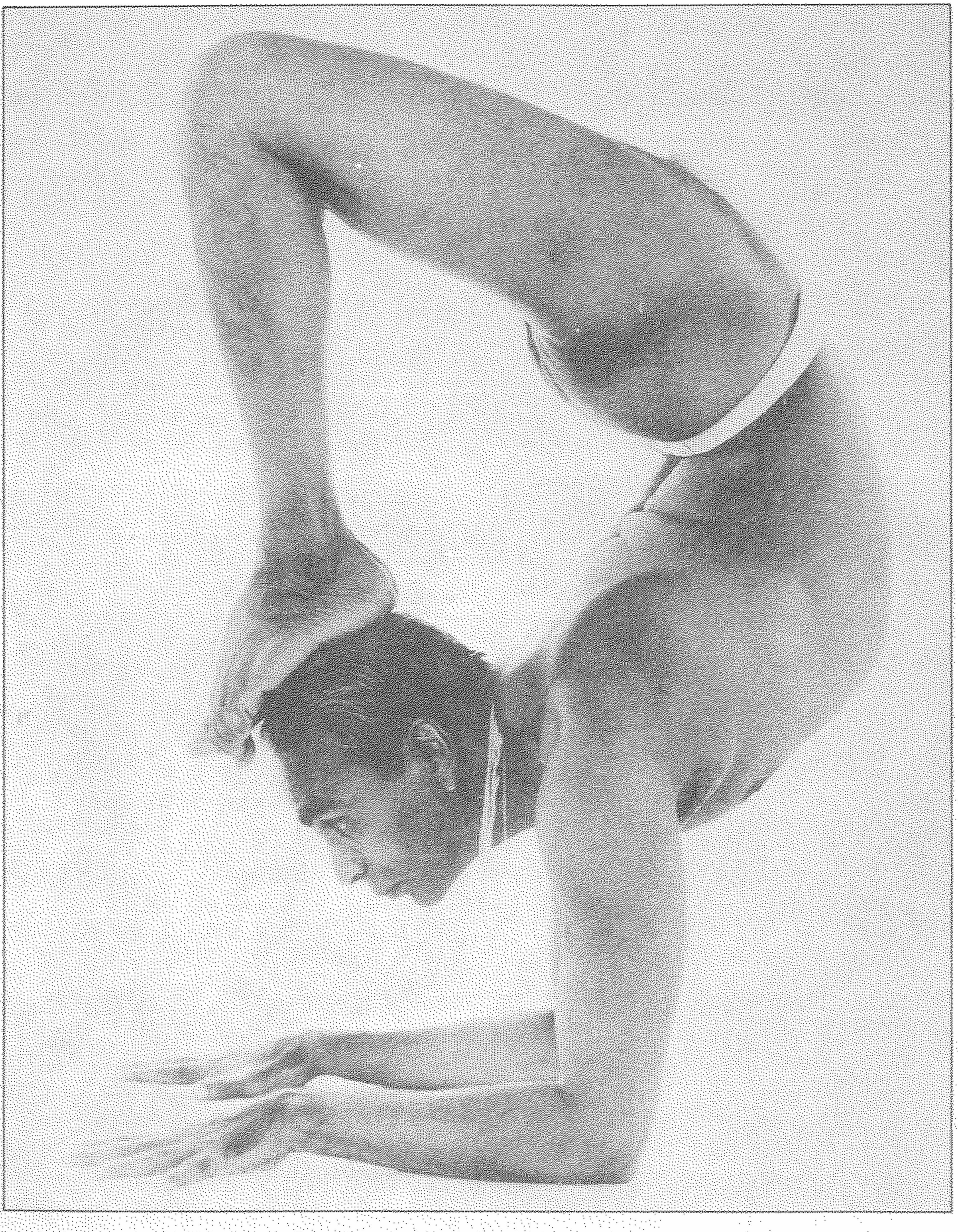
Measuring the Immeasurable

148 Eka Pāda Viparīta Daṇḍāsana II

Involution

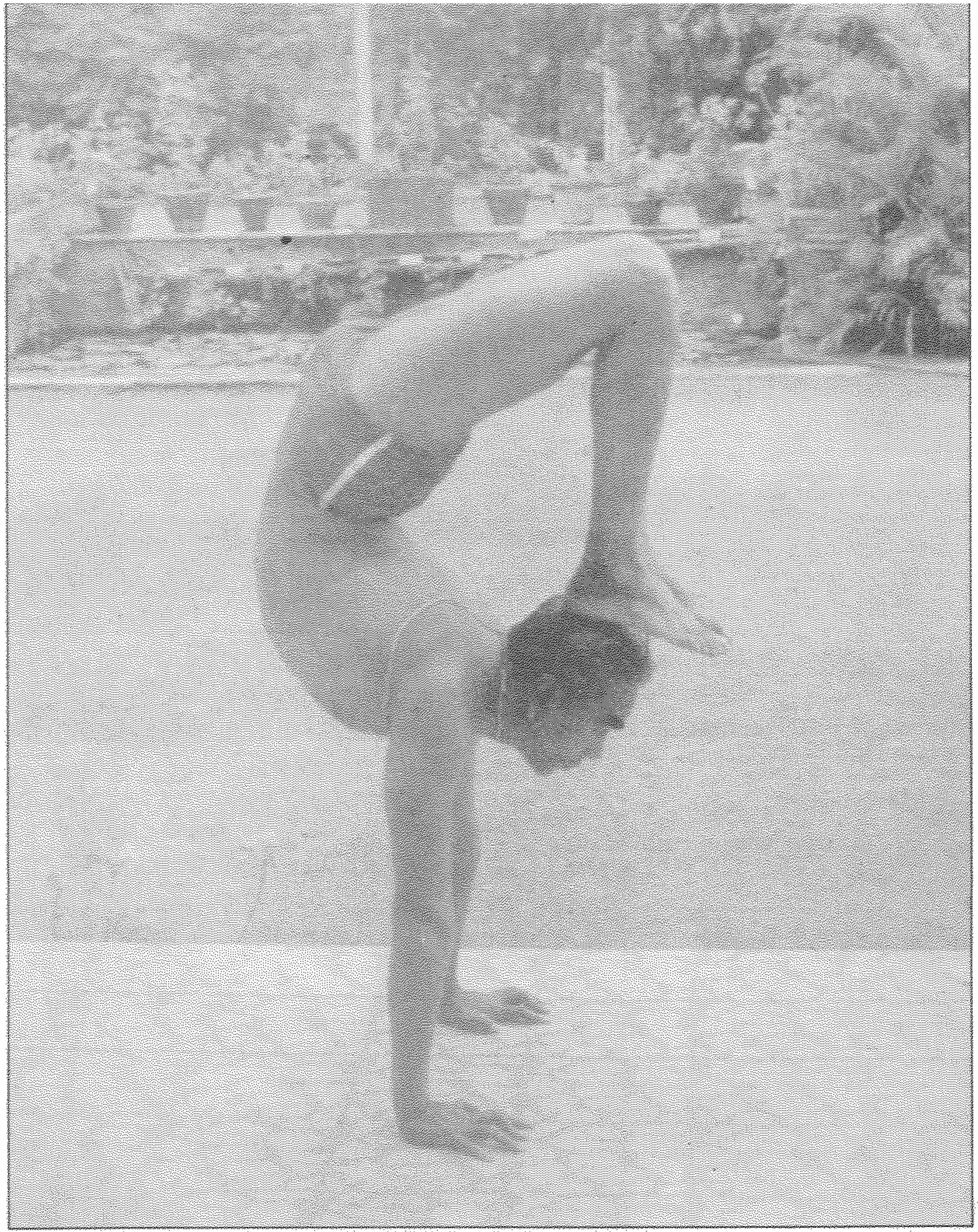
149 Cakra Bandhāsana





Taming One's Own Pride

150 Vṛścikāsana



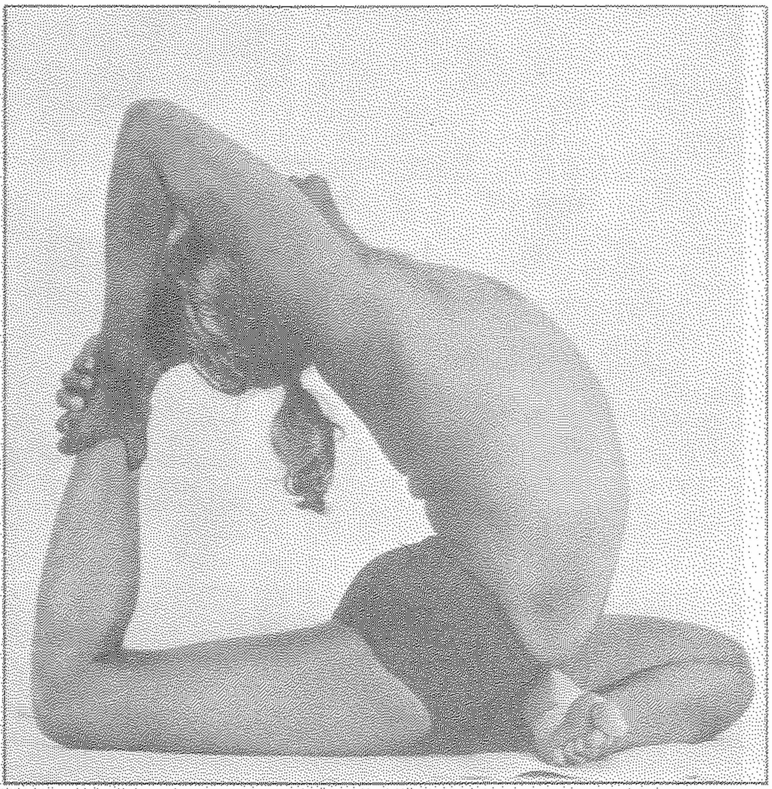
Triumph

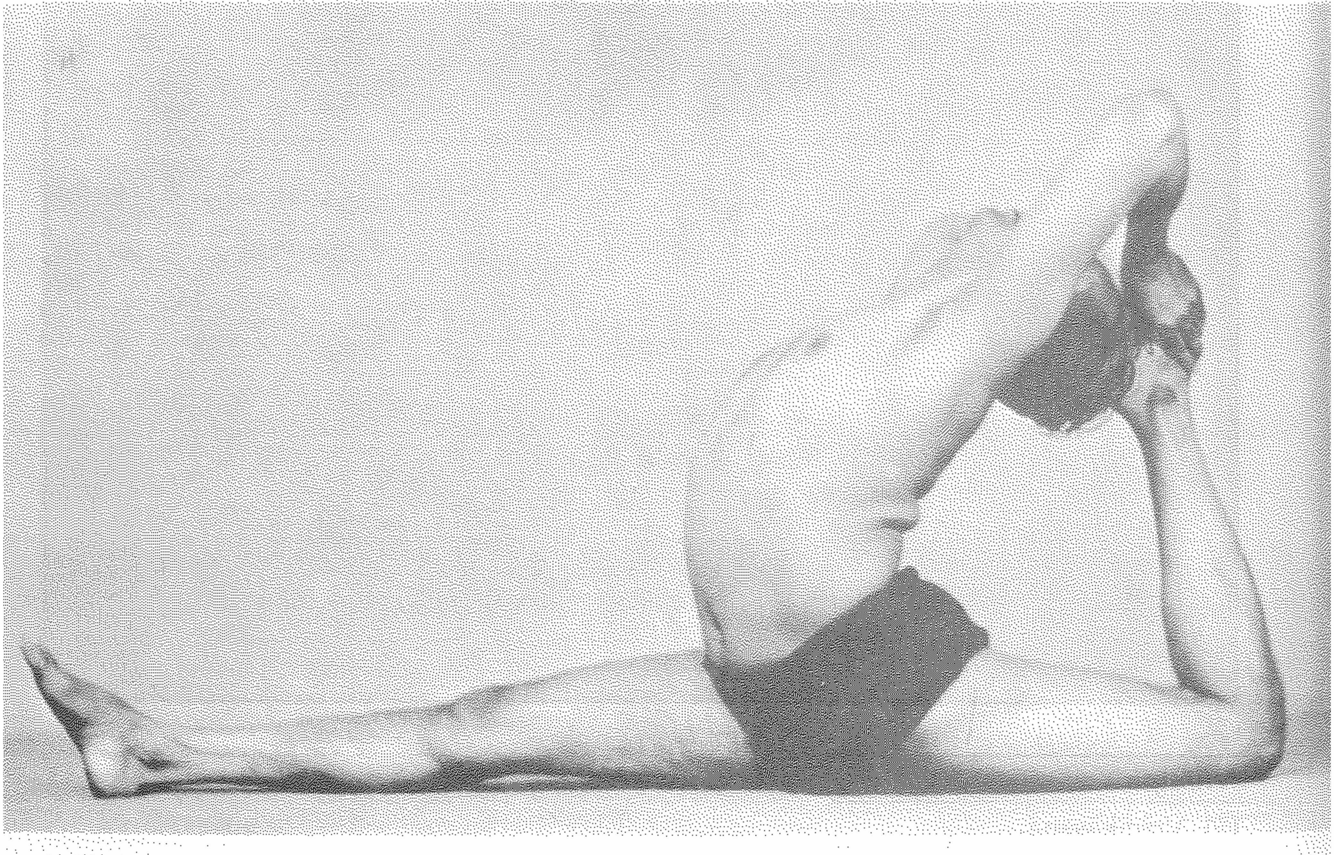
151 Vṛścikāsana

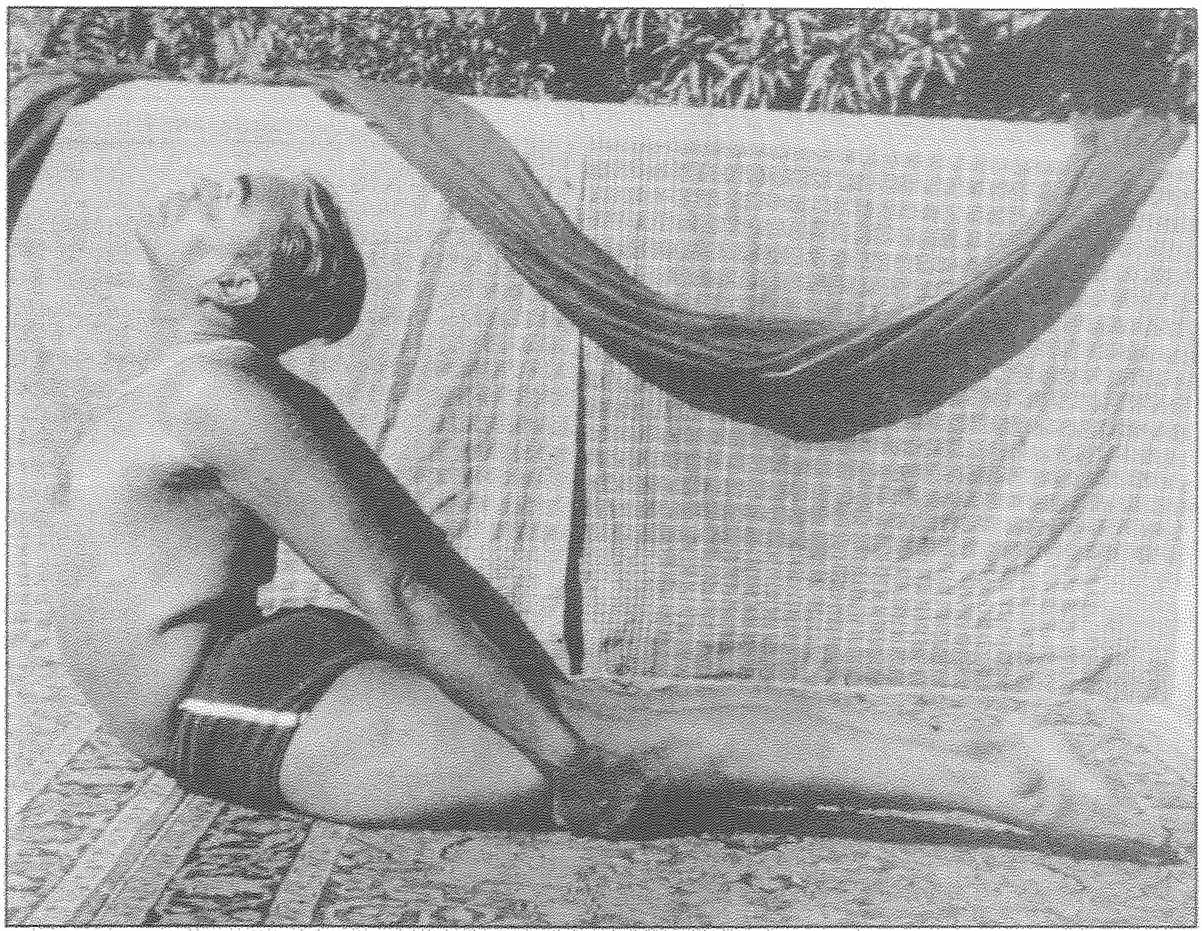
Palanquins

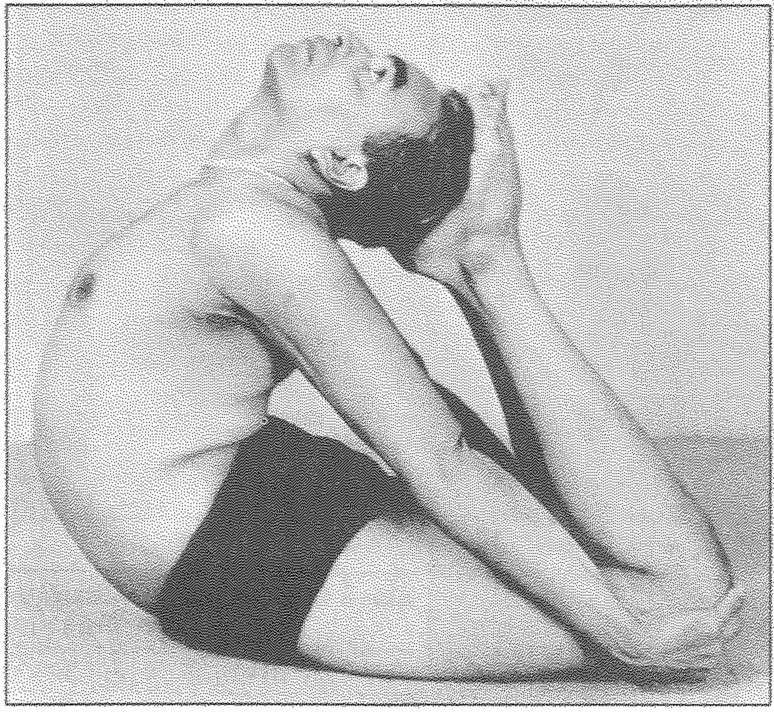
152 Eka Pāda Rājakapotāsana I

153 Eka Pāda Rājakapotāsana II







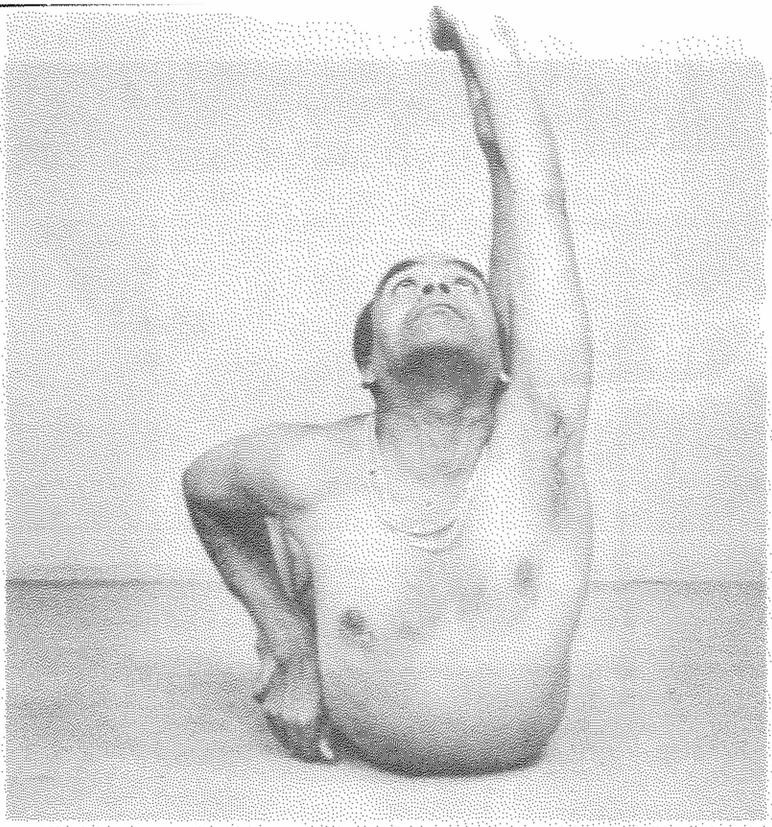


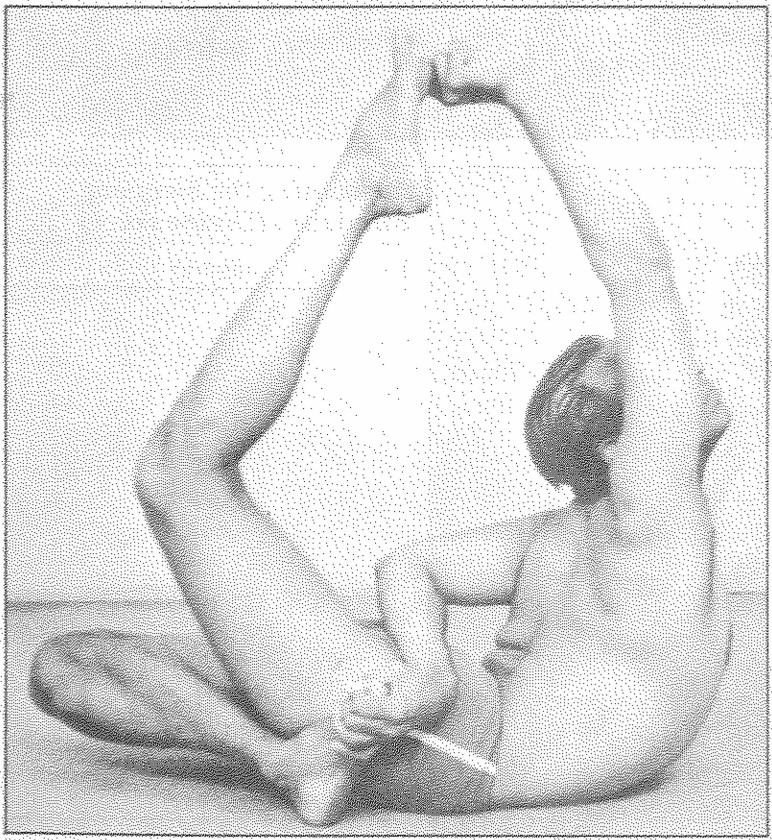
Awakening the Sleeping Kuṇḍalinī (Divine Force)

154 Bhujangāsana

The Dove of Peace

155 Rājakapotāsana

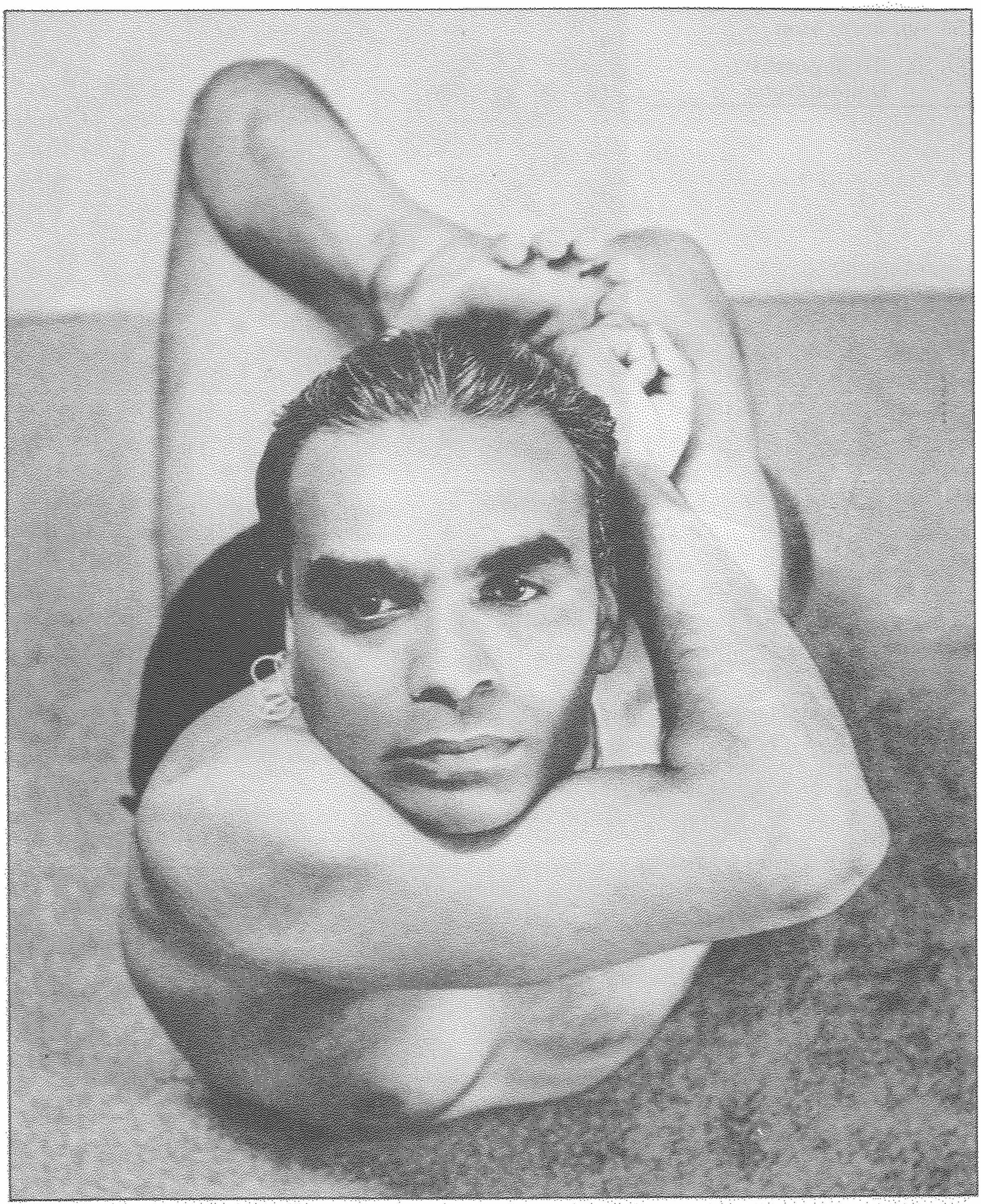




Pyramidal Towers

156 Gheraṇḍāsana I

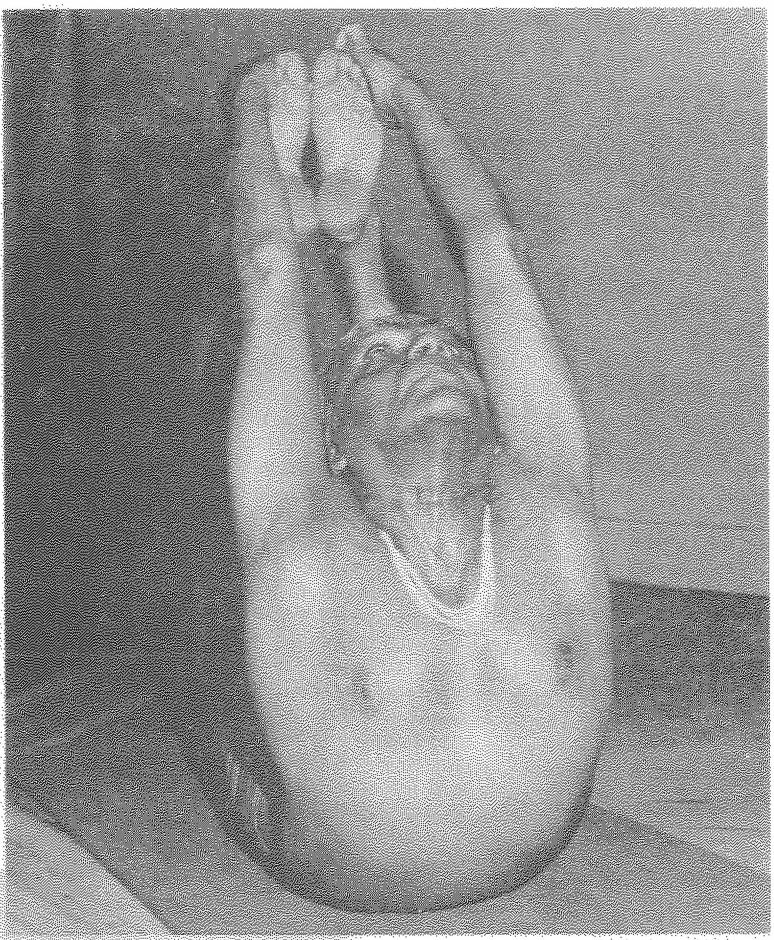
157 Gheraṇḍāsana II

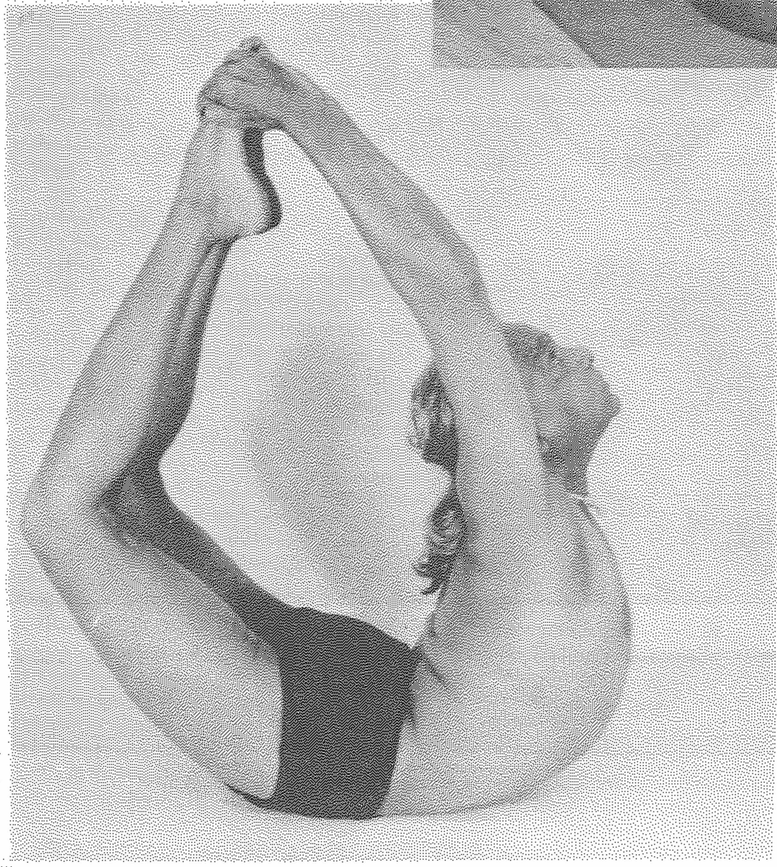


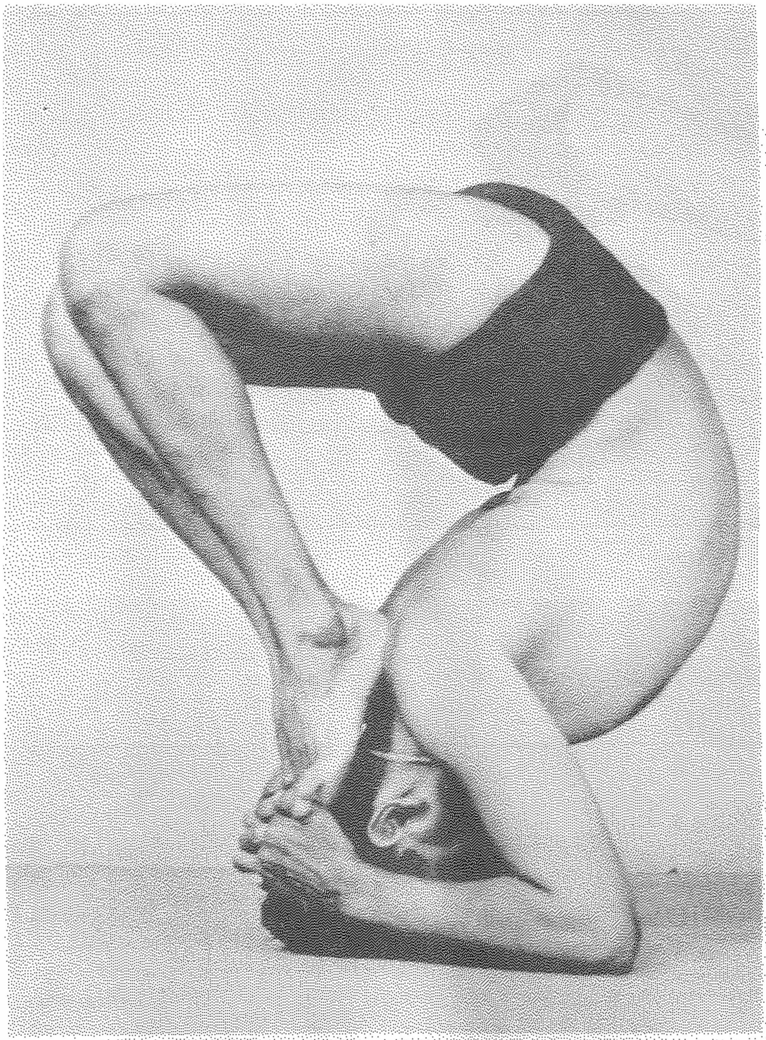
A Puzzle: Where Does It Begin and How Does It End?

158 Gheraṇḍāsana III

159, 160 Padangustha Dhanurasana





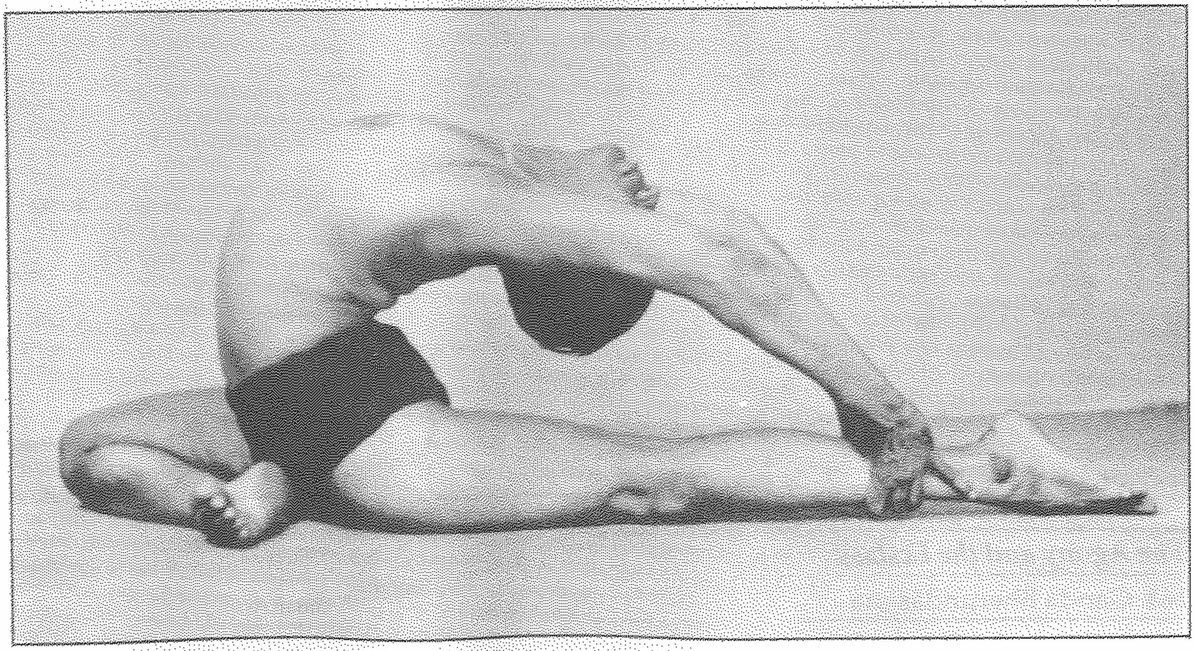


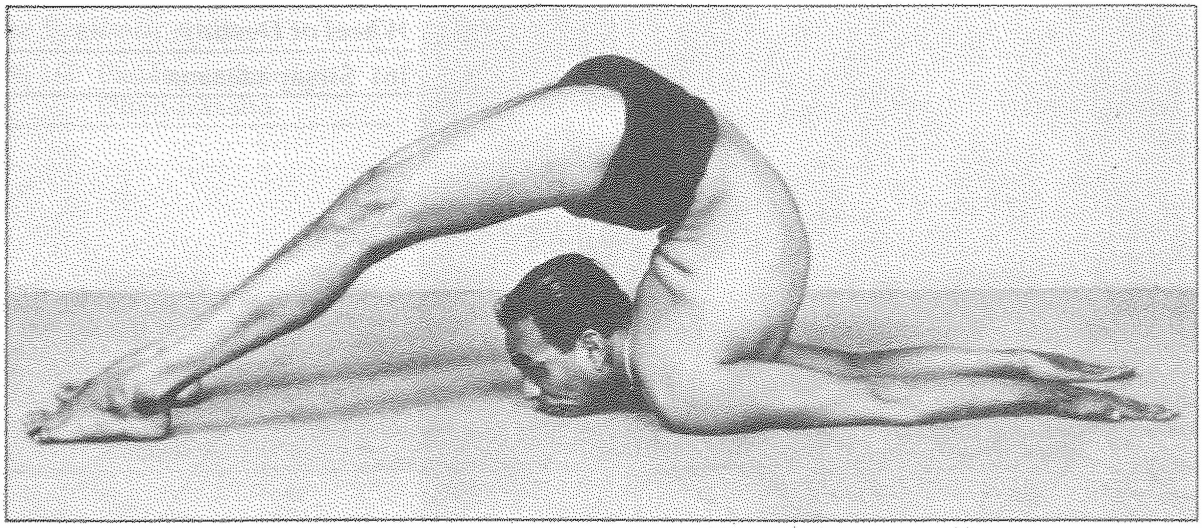
Wheel of Destiny

161 Śīrṣapādāsana

A Rainbow

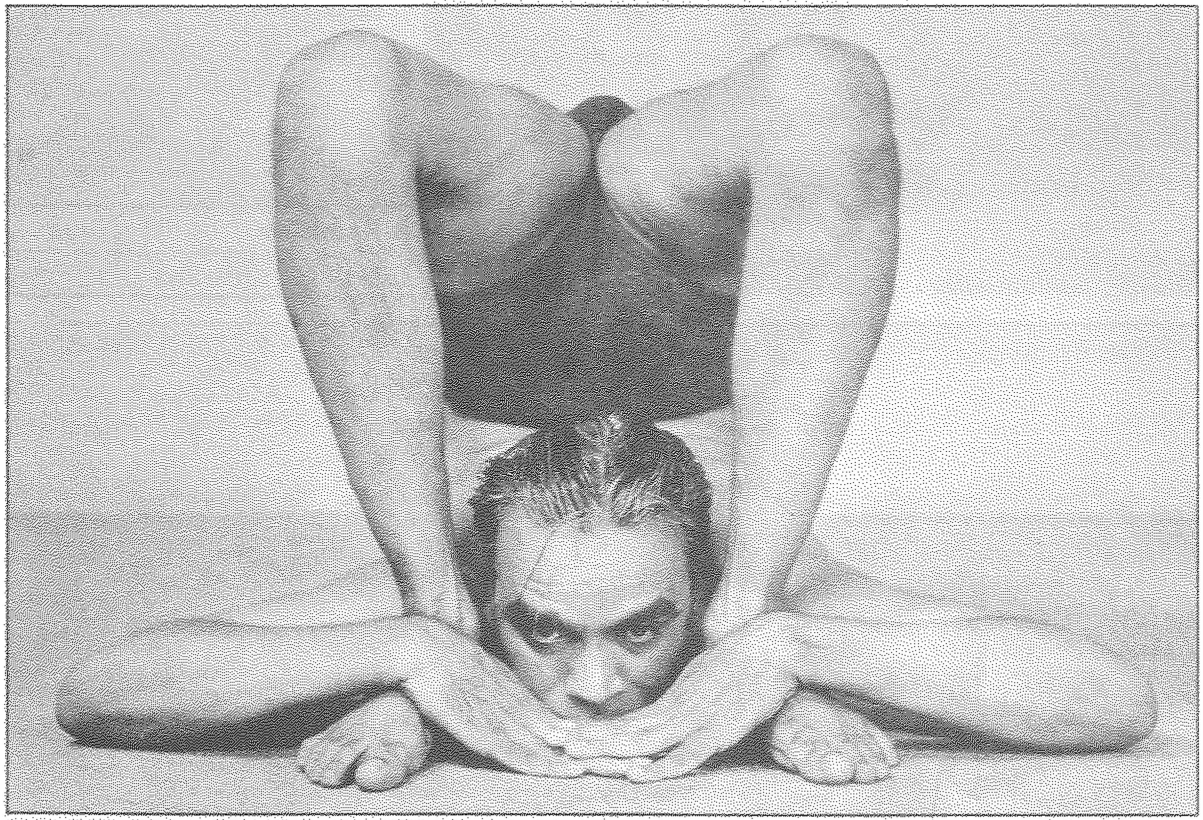
162 Vālakhilyāsana





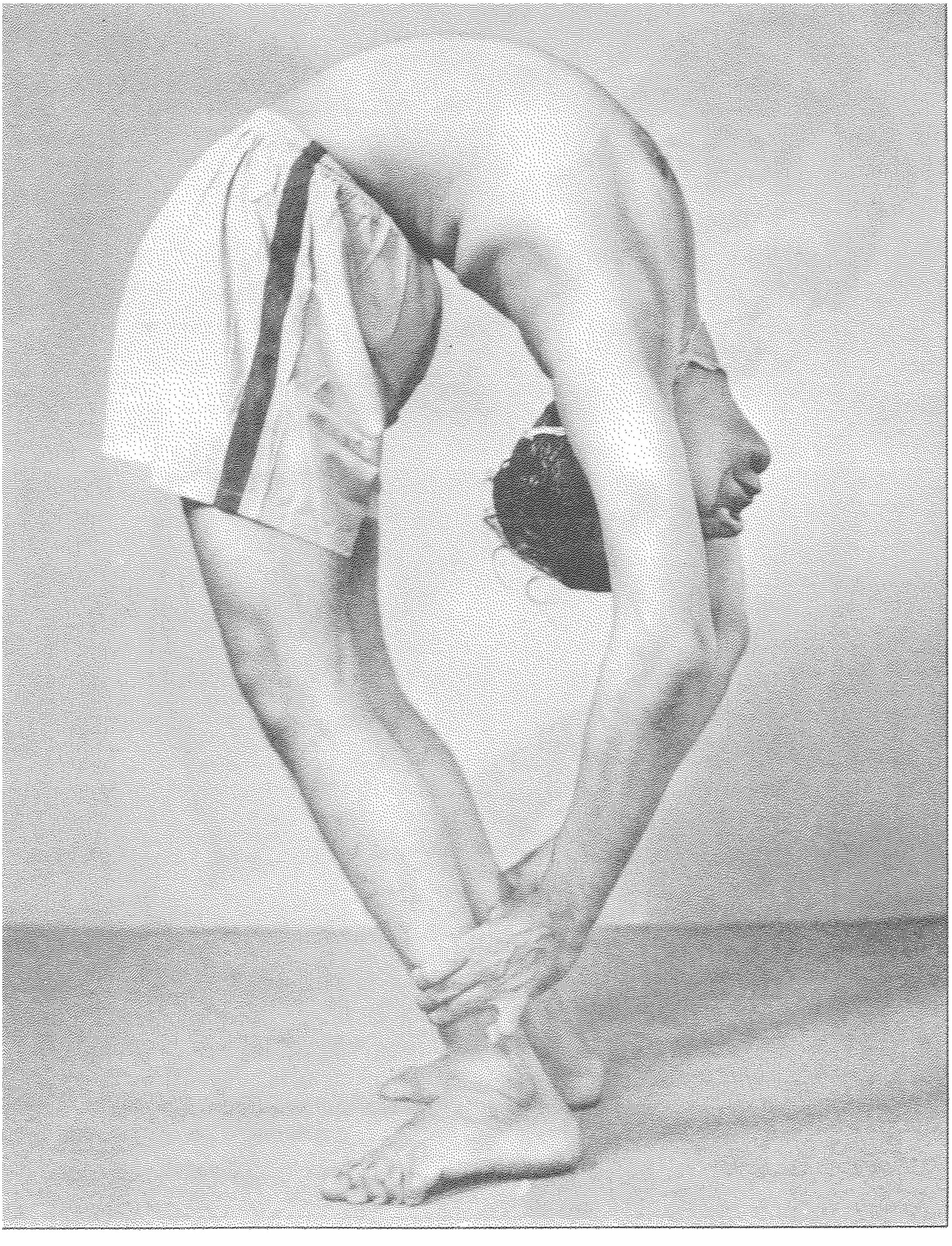
Spokes of the Wheel of Time Moving from the Known towards the Unknown

163 Viparīta Śalabhāsana



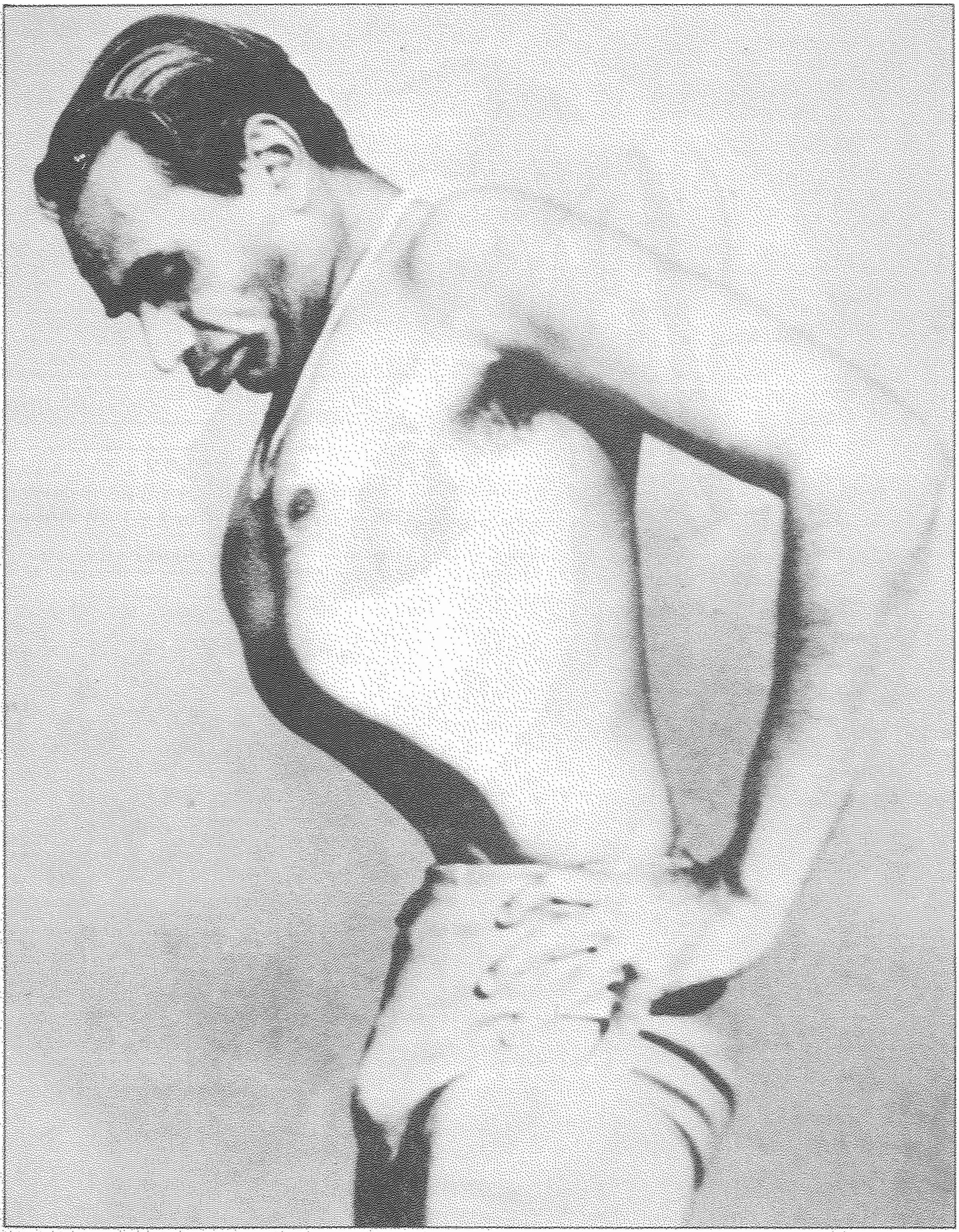
The Agony and the Ecstasy

164 Gaṇḍa Bheruṇḍāsana



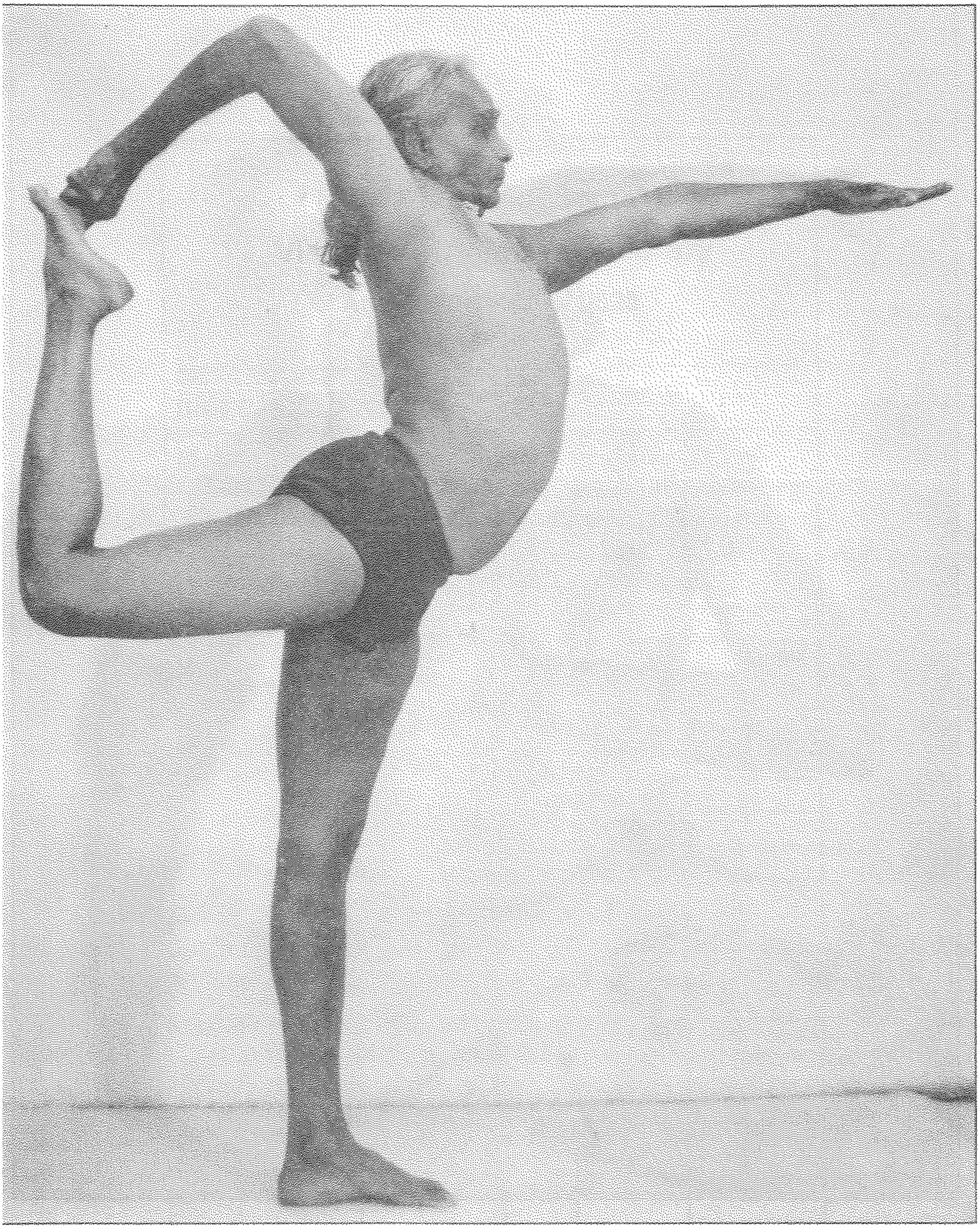
Capitulation

165 Triang Mukhottānāsana



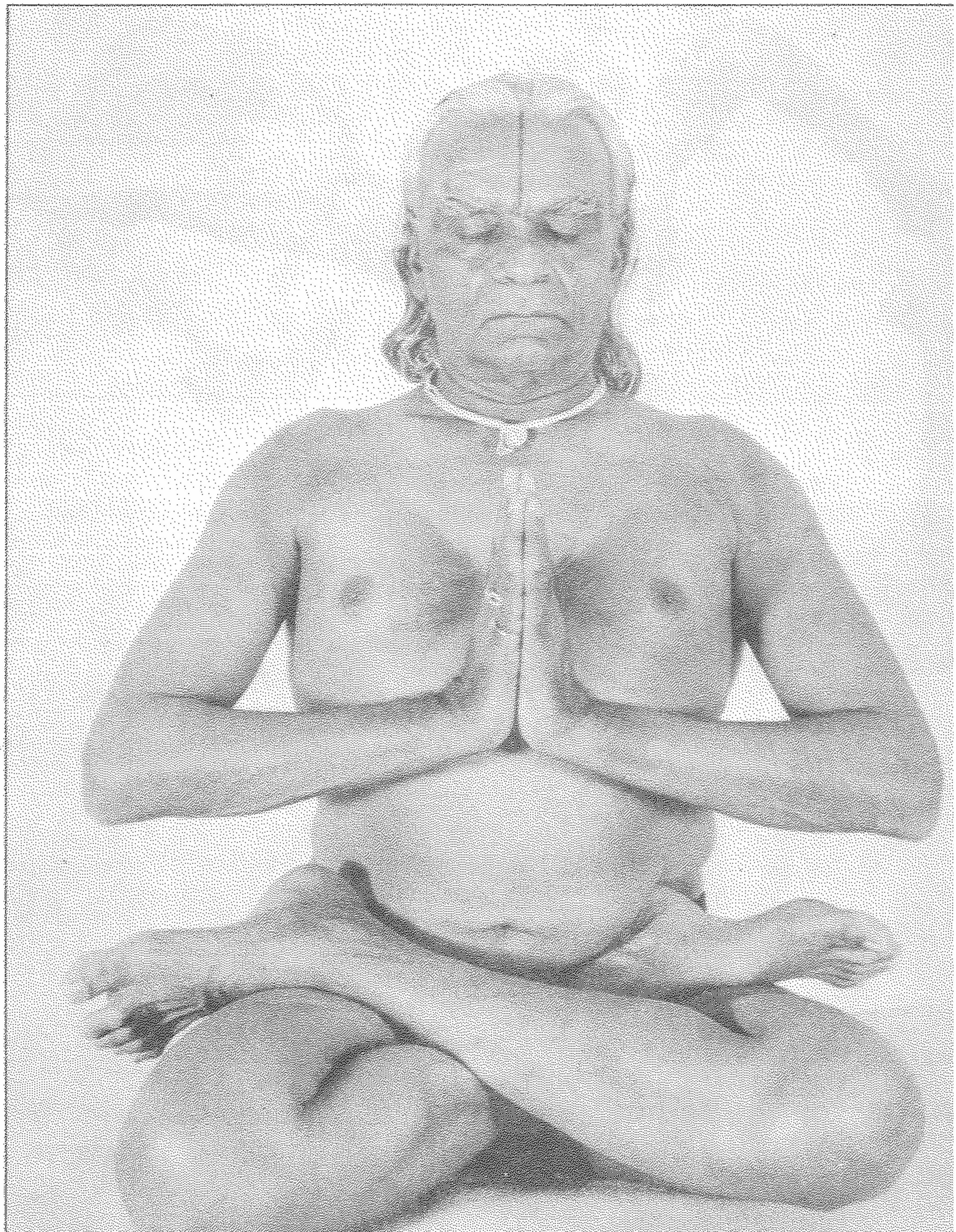
The Bottomless Pit

166 Uḍḍīyāna Bandha



Absolute Beauty

167 Naṭarājāsana



Quintessence

168 Dhyāna